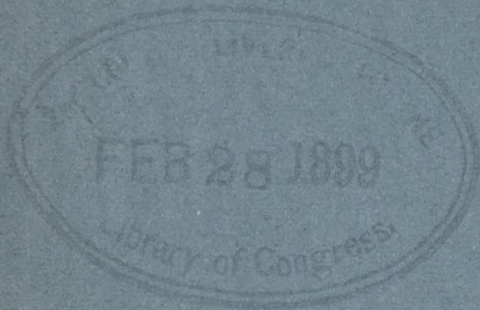


~ A ~

MINISTER'S PROBATION

2nd COPY,
1333.



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Chap. 3/5 Copyright No. _____

Shelf PZ3
.L475M

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

FEB 25 1899



A MINISTER'S PROBATION.

BY

MRS. SARAH CANNON LEAMON,

*Author of "Tossed About," "Tom Morgan's Farm," "The Hart
Jewels," etc.*



NASHVILLE, TENN.:

PUBLISHING HOUSE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH.

BARBEE & SMITH, AGENTS.

1899.

4

PZ3
.L475M

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1898,
By MRS. SARAH CANNON LEAMON,
In the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

Dedication.

*To All Ministers, of All Churches,
in All Countries,*

the following pages are

Respectfully Dedicated

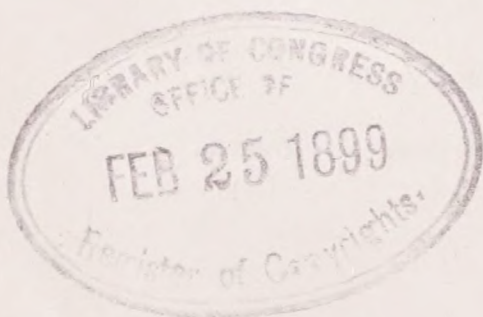
by the author,

Mrs. Sarah Cannon Leamon.

(3)

25913

ONE COPY RECEIVED.



also one copy rec'd
Feb-27. 99.

69183
Nov. 28. 98.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CHAPTER I.	
THE BAPTISM.....	7
CHAPTER II.	
THE FIRST SCHOOL.....	13
CHAPTER III.	
THE CORN HUSKING.....	25
CHAPTER IV.	
THE FIRST COMMUNION.....	36
CHAPTER V.	
AT COLLEGE.....	46
CHAPTER VI.	
A COUNTRY WEDDING.....	61
CHAPTER VII.	
THE COMMENCEMENT.....	73
CHAPTER VIII.	
A CALL TO PREACH.....	80
CHAPTER IX.	
ENGAGED.....	91
CHAPTER X.	
THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.....	107
CHAPTER XI.	
THE ORDINATION.....	124
CHAPTER XII.	
A BEREAVEMENT.....	131
CHAPTER XIII.	
RESIGNATION.....	146

CHAPTER XIV.		PAGE
MISSIONARY WORK		157
CHAPTER XV.		
A CALL		166
CHAPTER XVI.		
MARRIED		175
CHAPTER XVII.		
THE DONATION PARTY		193
CHAPTER XVIII.		
PROMOTED		201
CHAPTER XIX.		
THE UNWELCOME GUEST		214
CHAPTER XX.		
HOUSEKEEPERS		234
CHAPTER XXI.		
THE STEPMOTHER		247
CHAPTER XXII.		
PREACHERS' CHILDREN		258
CHAPTER XXIII.		
THE PROBATION ENDED		267

A MINISTER'S PROBATION.

CHAPTER I.

THE BAPTISM.

IT was the Monday following the observance of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, commonly called "communion Sabbath," in a little church on the bank of Pigeon Creek, a small stream which winds its way among the hills and valleys of Western Pennsylvania. The parishioners of that Presbyterian congregation were a sturdy yeomanry of Scotch-Irish descent, and, walking in the ways of their fathers, they adhered to a Scripture psalmody, and practiced close communion.

The services began on Friday, which was a day of fasting and prayer, preparatory to the partaking of the bread and wine, emblems of the broken body and shed blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. As was usual upon such occasions, the pastor was assisted by a ministerial brother, who fed a flock in a neighboring district, a few miles distant. The assistant did the most of the preaching, and the people of that rural community were glad of an opportunity for "occasional hearing," though the visiting clergyman belonged to their own household of faith, and they did not consider him as able or as eloquent as their own

beloved pastor. Ministers were human in 1802, and sometimes took advantage of being away from home, to display the wonderful depths of their learning.

Such was the case on that Monday. Mr. Lindsey preached a powerful discourse from the text: "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy." The people listened intently, and wondered at the knowledge of the speaker, as he unfolded the sublime mysteries of the beast and seven heads and ten horns and ten crowns.

At the close of the sermon the pastor rose in the pulpit and said: "Parents will present their children for baptism." A couple seated in the right-hand tier of seats rose promptly, and walked reverently to the front; another couple seated in the left-hand tier, after a moment's hesitation, followed them. The man of God propounded the usual questions, which were appropriately answered by the parents, who took upon themselves solemn vows to bring up their little ones in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. With a cup of sparkling water from a spring, which opened into the creek near by, and which had decided the location of the church, the minister descended the steps, laid his dripping hand upon the head of the first baby, and said, "Paul, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of

the Holy Ghost, one God;" passing to the next, "Phebe, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God. Amen."

Paul clenched his little fist, and sent up a cry, which showed his combative disposition, and gave warning that he would not be imposed upon with impunity; Phebe smiled as the water rolled down her cheeks, and pulled the preacher's whiskers while he administered the sacred rite. The congregation united in singing:

"All people that on earth do dwell,
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice;
Him serve with mirth, his praise forthtell,
Come ye before him and rejoice."

After the singing of the Psalm the benediction was pronounced, and the people slowly left the church. It was Monday, and they embraced the opportunity for social chats, free from the prickings of conscience for a violation of the Sabbath.

Mrs. Martin was standing under the protecting boughs of a large tree, when she was joined by Mrs. Fergus, who exclaimed: "Why didn't you tell me you were going to get Paul baptized? We intended to wait until the next communion for Phebe, but when I saw you going up I gave him the wink, and we went too."

"We didn't make up our minds until last night, but he's getting so big it ought to be attended to; he's over a year old, but something has always happened to prevent it. He was sick the com-

munion before the last, and I was sick the last, and it had to be put off. I'm real glad you got Phebe baptized, for I hated to go up alone. Ain't she a wee mite of a thing?"

"She's only four months old; I think she's large for her age. I was ashamed of her dress. She wore her best yesterday. If I had thought of getting her baptized, I would have saved it for to-day."

"Her dress is good enough, plenty good enough for anybody's child, anyway; you shouldn't think of her clothes," added Mrs. Martin laughingly.

"O no, of course not; you never think of Paul's," replied Mrs. Fergus in the same vein; and then said seriously, "I know we ought not to think about clothes as much as we do. Finery is apt to take the mind off more important things, but I am most sorry I got Phebe baptized in that old dress."

"If she never has anything worse than that to hurt her, she'll get through the world all right," remarked Mrs. Allen, who was the social autocrat of the neighborhood, and the troubled mother was comforted.

"Have you made your apple butter yet?" inquired Mrs. Beck, whose mind generally ran upon domestic matters.

"Yes, I made it the first of last week, and it is real nice, if I do say it myself," replied Mrs. Martin.

"I have not made mine yet. I have been very busy, and the children are not well, and I could not get around to it," said Mrs. Fergus.

Mrs. Allen had made a little for present use, but not her winter's supply.

While the women were talking about their preserving and apple butter making, the men were discussing their horses and sheep, their crops, their present and their future prospects of harvests and plenty. They consulted one another about a teacher for the coming winter's term of school, and agreed upon a day to meet and repair the schoolhouse, that it might be in readiness when a master should be selected to wield the scepter over the brains and backs of the fortunate urchins who should occupy the rude benches.

The married women formed one group, and the married men another. The young women did not gather themselves into a circle of youth and beauty. They scattered all over the forest in which the church was built, as if in search of some rare wild flower. It was very strange, away out there in the country, where the people had such limited opportunities for learning the ways of the world, but near every maiden hovered a young man. If some mischief-loving boy, who knew entirely too much for his age, broke in upon a pleasant *tête-à-tête*, he was immediately sent upon some imaginary errand which took him out of the way for a while at least.

The children had a good time. They played games under the very eaves of the church. Boys and girls jostled each other as if they were made of common clay.

At last some energetic farmer hunted up his wife and exclaimed: "Maria, ain't you never going to be ready to start home?"

"I'm ready whenever you be," was the submissive reply of the woman, who had been early taught the meaning of the vows which she had taken upon herself to "love, honor, and obey." Others followed the example, and soon the entire congregation was homeward bound. Those who lived near walked, while some were on horseback. Others were in the farm wagon, which often gave a "lift" to the less fortunate who had no such conveyance. Carriages were unknown in those days in that community, but somehow everybody except the sick managed to get to church. Aunt Hannah Allen, who resided with her brother, was afflicted with the rheumatism to such an extent that she was obliged to remain at home. She was sitting in her old armchair on the porch when the family returned, trying to be patient under her afflictions, and also trying to realize that it was better for her to be there than in the courts of the sanctuary, which she loved.

"How did you get along?" inquired her sister-in-law as she reached the steps.

"O, all right, a little lonesome. Who was baptized to-day?"

Mrs. Allen answered as she vanished within the door: "Nobody but Paul Martin and Phebe Fergus."

CHAPTER II.

THE FIRST SCHOOL.

“ARE you going to start Phebe to school next week?” inquired Mr. Beck, who was a member of the committee that had been appointed at a school meeting to gather up the children, that they might have a good school.

“No, she is too small, she is only five years old; she cannot go.”

“What is there to hinder her from going? I am around seeing what can be done. The master is pretty independent, and wants a dollar a day. It is pretty high wages, but he is a good schoolmaster, and I suppose he can get it in other places, and as there is not many of us, we will have to put our hands to the plow if we raise it. Phebe is a good girl and will not need much correction, and being she is all you have to send since James died, you ought to feel it your duty to help along and send her.”

“That is the trouble; she has no older brother or sister to go with her and take care of her; she cannot go alone, that is certain.”

“She will not have to. Jane Martin goes past here, and she will think nothing of stopping for her. Paul is going, and he is about Phebe’s age. Shall I put her name down?”

“ I don't know. Paul is older than Phebe, and he is stronger. What do you say? ” and Mrs. Fergus glanced toward her husband.

“ O, let her go; it will not cost much, and she will be safe enough. I will speak to the master and tell him not to be too hard on her. Weller makes a good master, and we must support him.”

Mr. Beck wrote the name, Phebe Fergus, and, after talking a few minutes about the hard times and the news of the day, he hurried on to swell the list of scholars for the school, which was to begin the next Monday, and was to be presided over by Abraham Weller, the ablest master in all the community, if the requisite one dollar a day and a reasonable number of pupils could be secured. The teacher did not want to be paid for services that were not rendered, hence it was as important to have the children in attendance as it was to provide the money for the salary. The opening day dawned auspiciously. The sun shone brightly and the birds sang sweetly as they flew among the trees and talked to each other in bird language of all those wonderful children, who came uninvited so suddenly into their midst. They were so thankful to the God of the birds that it was in autumn, and their birdlings were all out of their nests, that neither their eggs nor their children were in danger at the hands of the rude, bad boys, who climbed the trees and stole the empty, deserted homes, where the little ones had been sheltered by motherly wings until able to fly and care for

themselves. The master appeared early upon the scene, armed with a Bible, an arithmetic, a bundle of goose quills, a ruler, and a strap. The advanced pupils were equipped with an arithmetic, a copybook, and a Bible, to be used as a text-book in reading. Once in a while an ambitious boy aspired to the study of grammar. Such were regarded with awe, and looked up to with a reverence just a degree less than that given to the master himself. The intermediate grade read in the Testament, and studied the spelling book and the first part of the arithmetic. Some of the primary grade possessed rude primers with flaming pictures. Others were provided with a piece of a board, shaped like a paddle, on which the master obligingly printed the alphabet with a piece of charcoal taken from the open fireplace, which was probably left at the close of the preceding term, for the convenience of the next teacher. They called it a subscription school, and not many of them had much knowledge of any other kind. It was virtually a graded school, since there were three distinct grades, consisting of the a-b-c class, the Testament class, and the Bible class. It was as much an event to them to be promoted from one of those classes into the next higher as it is now to be promoted from one grade into another in the best schools in our cities.

When the time arrived to commence the work of the day the master rapped on the window with his ruler, which was made partly for that purpose.

The scholars filed in and took their places without ceremony, the back seats being used by common consent by the larger pupils. Quiet having been secured, the master advanced to his desk and took up the subscription paper, which had been furnished him. "Answer to your names," he commanded, without any preliminary remarks.

"John Smith."

"Present."

"Mary Beck."

"Present."

"Samuel Beck."

"Present."

"Jane Martin."

"Present."

"Paul Martin."

"Present."

"Phebe Fergus."

No answer.

"Where is Phebe Fergus?" and Weller turned to the school with an inquiring look.

"Over there, sir," replied one of the larger girls.

"Phebe Fergus."

Silence.

"Phebe Fergus, come up here," ordered the irate master, with darkening brow.

Some one gave her a push and motioned toward the teacher's desk. She advanced slowly, and stood trembling with terror before the strong man who awaited her, ruler in hand.

"Did you hear me call your name?"

“Yes, sir.”

“Did you answer?”

“No, sir.”

Weller was too angry to speak. He looked down in amazement on the trembling, sobbing little specimen of humanity who defied him to his face. He gathered strength for a glorious victory, and, grasping her tiny hand in his huge, hard one, he raised his ruler over her shrinking shoulders, as he exclaimed: “You will answer next time.”

“Master! master!”

Weller paused, as Paul Martin bounded to the side of Phebe and shouted: “She never went to school before; she don’t know to say ‘Present;’ she don’t know nothing.”

“O, is that it? yes, yes,” replied the enlightened and relieved teacher. “Did you ever go to school before?”

“No, sir.”

“How did you know to say ‘Present?’”

“Jane, she told me when you said, ‘Paul Martin,’ for me to say ‘Present.’ Jim Fergus is dead, and there was nobody to tell Phebe.”

“Yes, yes,” mused the master. “Glad you told me; now go to your seats, and, little girl, when I call your name, say ‘Present,’ will you?”

“Yes, sir.”

Weller picked up the paper, which he had laid on his desk. “Phebe Fergus.”

“Yes, sir.”

“What? Phebe Fergus.”

“Present,” prompted a larger girl on the seat behind her.

“Present,” faintly echoed Phebe.

“Stop that whispering!” thundered Weller. “Phebe, you are awful hard to learn, but you have got it at last. It takes patience in my business;” and, glancing complacently at the older pupils, he proceeded to finish calling the roll. When through with that important part of the programme, he faced his school and gave directions in regard to their work. “The Bible class will take the first chapter in Genesis, and the Testament class will take the first chapter of Matthew; the first spelling class will take the first two lines on the tenth page; and the second spelling class will take the first two lines on the thirtieth page. All that want to study arithmetic will bring your books up to me, and I will show you your lessons.”

A few advanced with conscious pride, book in hand, and were speedily placed in classes of twos and threes, according to their several attainments.

Soon the usual hum of the schoolroom of that day was heard—“B-a-ba-k-e-r-ker-baker;” “A-d-ad-a-ada-m-a-n-t-mant-adamant;” “And God called the firmanent, heaven;” “And Aram begat Aminadab, and Aminadab begat; I can’t read but three verses”—all at once in a steady monotone, that rejoiced the heart of the master, as he looked with pride upon his studious pupils, without a thought of the noise and confusion, that amounted almost to an uproar. Consulting his

timepiece, he announced, "It is time to say your lessons. I will begin with the little ones. Where is that little Fergus girl?"

"Here she is, sir," said Mary Beck.

"Come on."

"Go and say your lesson," whispered Mary encouragingly.

"Stop that whispering! I am competent to tell the child what is expected of her, without any outside assistance."

Phebe went up to the master, of whom she was in deadly fear.

"Do you know your letters?"

"No, sir,"

"Well, you are here to learn. Is this your book?"

"Yes, sir. It's tore," she added deprecatingly.

"It does very well; it is all here," replied Weller graciously.

It began to dawn upon his sharpened intellect that the child was afraid of him. That was all very well, for he wanted his scholars to be afraid of him, but he did not want to frighten a little girl out of her wits the first day; furthermore, he wanted the moral and the pecuniary support of her father, as well as the good opinion of his school.

"I have forgotten your name. What is it?"

"Phebe," she replied timidly.

"Well, Phebe, you must not be afraid of me. I will not bite you. Speak up. Would you like

to have some nice little boy say his lesson with you?"

"Yes, sir."

Weller chuckled as he inquired: "Where is that boy that never went to school?"

"It is Paul Martin; here he is."

"Paul, come here. Do you know your letters?"

"No, sir."

"Well, you and Phebe may make a team. You can both look on the same book. That is A. Say it."

"A," in duet.

"B."

"B," in duet.

"C."

"C," in duet.

"Say it over again."

"Say it over again," in duet.

Some of the larger pupils made an unsuccessful effort to suppress a laugh.

"Order! order! what are you about? Are you not ashamed to be laughing at little children, whose minds are just opening to receive the first lessons of instruction?" and the instructor grew eloquent over the greatness of their misdemeanor.

"There, you may go to your seats now, and be quiet until I call you next time."

And so it came about that Paul Martin and Phebe Fergus constituted the first division of the a-b-c class.

A routine of study and recitation was established

and gone through with. There was not much system, but Weller was a good teacher, and he started out with the determination to do his best. He pronounced the hard words in the reading lessons, and worked the hard sums in the arithmetic.

On the evening of that memorable first day Mrs. Fergus was astonished when her gentle, meek little Phebe climbed upon her lap, and amid tears and sobs said: "I don't like to go to school; I don't like the master; he most whipped me. Don't make me go any more."

David Fergus and his wife always went hand in hand. They took counsel with each other, and after obtaining all the facts in the case, from Phebe and from the Martin children, who stopped for her the next morning, they decided that it would not be best for their little girl to have her own way. Obedience was the first law in their parental government. She was rather young to go to school, but, having enrolled her as a pupil, and having started her, it would not do to permit her to stop. Her repugnance to school and to the master must be overcome, and now was the accepted time.

"I intended to speak to Weller before school commenced, but I did not have a chance. I suppose it would hardly do just now. He might think it was interfering with his business. Send her along; I expect she will come out all right;" and David went to his work, not altogether easy as to the outcome of his premature attempt to educate his little daughter.

"I don't want to go," moaned Phebe.

"O, but you must go," said her mother, persuadingly. "Don't you want to learn your a-b-c's?"

"No, I don't."

"Don't you like to play 'Black-man', and 'Pussy' wants a corner' at noon?"

"I don't want to go," she persisted.

"I don't want to whip you," replied her mother.

"Come on," coaxed Jane Martin. "You will like it better when you get used to it."

"I'll make old Weller keep his hands off you," added Paul.

Phebe yielded to the children's entreaties, because she feared her mother's displeasure, and started to school feeling that all the world was against her. After she had entered her protest, and it had been set aside, she knew nothing else but to obey. It was quite a long walk to the school-house, and as they were late starting, and did not hurry, they found that school had opened. They entered timidly.

"What made you so late? Did you play on the road?" inquired the master.

"No, sir; we were waiting for Phebe. Mother said for us to stop for her, and she didn't want to come, and we had to wait until her mother made her," explained Jane.

Weller was endowed with plenty of horse sense, and understood the situation in a moment. "Did not want to come to school?" he exclaimed, in well-feigned surprise. "We could not get

along without her. I was just waiting to call the first class in the a-b-c's. Come and let us see how much you remember."

The lesson was a repetition of the last one, with a few additions and slight variations. The master gave Phebe a paddle, which he had probably prepared for some one else, and told her to take it home with her and show it to her mother, and be sure and be able to tell her which was O and which was P, that stood for Phebe. At noon he gave her a large red apple, and remarked to the rest of the pupils that they must not think that he was partial to Phebe; but she was very young to come to school, and they must all try to make it pleasant for her.

Phebe overcame her fear of him, and schoolmaster Weller learned an important lesson, that day, which was not in any of their books, but which served him many a useful purpose thereafter.

Time dragged its slow length along, and when school neared the close of the term it was decided to have a "last day." That meant that the children would all wear their best clothes, and that the parents would be present, and some of the best educated among them would give out sums to the arithmetic scholars and hard words to the spelling classes. When they had made a sufficient display of their attainments, speeches would be made to them, in which they would be told how smart they were, and how much better their advantages were than those enjoyed by their parents. At the

appointed time all that was gone through with, to the edification of all present.

Paul Martin spelled loud and long, and finally went down when he forgot, and said, "s-m-o-a-k smoke." Phebe Fergus recited her verse in a clear, pure tone: "Blessed are merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." Everybody wondered at their proficiency, and smiled their approbation. The advanced pupils solved problems in the rule of three that were considered posers. The parsing of the two boys who studied grammar was one of the wonders of the day. The master made a speech, in which he told them how much they had learned, and how much they had yet to learn.

The committee were then called upon, and when they had exhausted their eloquence the common fathers had a chance to say a few words. Everything was harmonious, and all agreed that they had had a good school, and that it had been presided over by a worthy, upright, competent master.

A subscription paper was prepared, and Mr. Fergus was requested to pass among the people and get as many signatures for the next term as he could. He had no trouble in making up a respectable list. When the show was dismissed an inquisitive old lady laughingly asked Master Weller which one of his scholars had learned most during the term. Unhesitatingly he replied: "All have done well, especially the little ones. No one has done better than the two youngest, Paul Martin and Phebe Fergus."

CHAPTER III.

THE CORN HUSKING.

THE amusements in those early days generally combined pleasure and utility. When the young people met together by appointment, it was at a quilting, a wood chopping, an apple butter stirring, or a corn husking. Sometimes two of those important affairs were united, and such was the case at Carson's corn husking. The girls were all invited to be present at one o'clock, with needle and thimble, to quilt a star quilt, of blue and white cotton goods, which Mrs. Carson had taken great pains in piecing, and which elicited the admiration of all that beheld it. They went with nimble fingers and equally nimble tongues. They talked of the cows they milked and the butter they churned. They talked of the flax they spun and of the linen they wove. They talked and quilted, and quilted and talked. They talked about their preacher and they talked about his wife. They did not say any harm of either of them, but they talked. They talked about their sewing and the number of quilts they had pieced. They talked of their knitting and the number of pairs of stockings they had knit. When they had exhausted every imaginable subject, and could think of nothing else to talk about, they talked about the boys.

"I wonder if George Jones will be here?" inquired Martha Roberts.

"La me! how should we know? I was just going to ask you. If you do not know, you cannot expect us to know," replied Ellen White.

Then all the girls giggled, just exactly like a modern set of giggling girls, when similar laughing remarks are made, which are supposed to mean much more than they do.

"Will Paul Martin be here?" asked Mary Davis.

"You will have to ask Phebe Fergus about that," was the teasing reply.

"Phebe Fergus? I did not know that he ever went with her. When did he become her property, I should like to know?"

"He is not my property," retorted Phebe.

"You need not fly off the handle about it; I am sure I do not know anybody that cares if he is. I had not heard it, that is all," said Mary sweetly.

"You have not heard it yet, and never will," and Phebe seized the scissors and snapped off an unoffending thread, as if she felt a moral antipathy toward it.

"Girls, quit your fighting about your beaus. Think about your work. I want that quilt out of the frames in time to set the table for supper;" and Mrs. Carson, with assumed seriousness, shook her head at the culprits through the door, which opened into the kitchen.

The girls all blushed, and every one of them declared that she had not opened her lips to say a word for more than half an hour. Good nature was restored, the needles flew, and the quilt was finished and taken from the frames in ample time.

A plain, well-cooked, substantial supper followed, which was eaten with zest by the hungry, happy maidens, whose appetites were whetted by faithful work, well done.

Mr. Carson asked a blessing upon the food at the beginning of the meal, and returned thanks at its close.

Every girl there volunteered to help wash the dishes. Their standing in society depended a great deal upon their reputation for industry. A girl who sat around unconcerned, while some one else did the work, was but little respected, and was treated accordingly. Their training had been such that nearly every one of them loved work, and enjoyed doing it. If any one did not, it was to her interest to assume the virtue that did not come natural to her.

When the dishes were all washed, and things put in their proper places, the girls began to primp. Soap and water, combs and brushes, were in demand. Their work was done, and the boys were gathering at the barn. Tallow candles placed in excavated pumpkins afforded light. The girls were not expected to husk corn after quilting all the afternoon, but they would have to go out to the barn, once in a while, to see how the work was progress-

ing, and it was necessary that they should look sweet and neat.

When the corn was all husked the fun would begin. How those young men worked. The knowledge that their sisters and their neighbors' sisters were waiting for them may have helped them. There was no prince nor princess at that corn husking. Every fellow fortunate enough to get a red ear was expected and almost required to kiss the girl that he considered the prettiest of the company. The obliging farmer saw to it beforehand that there was a sprinkling of red ears in the pile of corn on the barn floor. George Jones was the first to find the coveted prize

"Hurrah for George!"

"Lend it to me!"

"What will you take for it?"

"Where is your girl?"

Such were the good-natured exclamations that greeted him as he got up and brushed the husks from his clothes.

"His girl," was evidently not among the bevy in the barn, for he made a bee line for the house, where some of the party were setting the table for supper, when the corn should be finished. Phebe Fergus was out in the kitchen piling doughnuts on a plate.

The boys from the barn crowded into the room eager to see the fun, while George glanced around, looking for his girl. He saw her, and, without a word of warning, he rushed into the

kitchen, and, throwing his arms around Phebe, gave her a resounding smack.

“George Jones!”

“Phebe Fergus!”

“Ain’t you ashamed?”

“No, I ain’t.”

“You must be crazy!”

Phebe struggled to free herself from his detaining clasp. Everybody was looking on, and no one thought that there was the least impropriety in the embrace, because the fortunate youth had a red ear.

The boys returned to the barn and went to work with renewed energy, as if to make up for the time that had been lost, while the girls stood in speechless amazement.

“Well, I never!” exclaimed Mrs. Carson.

“Little Phebe Fergus! Who would have thought it?” said Jane Martin.

“Did you ever have a beau before?”

“I haven’t one yet.”

“She’s a setting out,” sneered Martha Roberts.

“She is not, either; you are just mad because he didn’t kiss you. Fight it out with him, and don’t take your spite out on poor Phebe,” was the admonition of Ellen White, as the most of them started off to reconnoiter in the vicinity of the barn. A couple went for a basket of apples, and another couple went for a crock of milk. Mrs. Carson was left alone with Phebe, and she used her opportunity. “La, Phebe, I was surprised. How old are you?”

"Fifteen."

"Are you? You do not look that old. Did George Jones ever pay you any attention before?"

"No, he didn't."

"Do you like him?"

"I would like him well enough, if he would behave himself."

"He does behave himself," replied Mrs. Carson laughingly; "every boy kisses a girl when he finds a red ear. It would be considered queer if he did not. I am surprised, though, that he chose you."

"So am I."

"Why?"

"Why are you?"

"O, I hardly know. You are such a little tad of a creature, and have never been out much. Why do you not go more?"

"I have no one to go with me. It is one of the advantages of being the oldest child."

"How are you going to get home to-night?"

"Jane Martin is going past our house."

"She will be likely to have company of her own. George Jones will be sure to ask you to let him take you home. Let him go, and then you will be out of Jane's way."

"Nobody ever took me home from any place in my life."

"You will never learn younger. You had better go with George than tag on with Jane and her beau. Two is company, and three is one over."

“I do not intend to tag on with anybody.”

“Of course not. I would invite you to stay all night, but I know that your mother would be uneasy about you. It is not right for young people to stay away from home overnight, unless their parents know that they are going to.”

“I would not stay for anything. Mother would be frightened to death. I will get home some way. I am not afraid to go alone.”

“No, nothing would hurt you; but it would not look well, and you might become afraid on the way. Just wait, and we will see;” and Mrs. Carson smiled quietly at the girl’s evident distress.

A shout at the barn heralded the news that another red ear had come to light. All rushed to the scene, and got there just in time to see a stalwart youth clasp Ellen White to his manly bosom as he imprinted the conventional kiss upon her rosy lips, and to hear her exclaim:” Quit that, Hugh Scott!”

Obedient Hugh quit, and again work was resumed. The piles of corn rapidly grew larger. Many willing hands made quick work. While the fodder was stored away for rough feed the coming winter, some of the huskers carried the corn to the crib, that was ready to receive it. Shout after shout went up as one red ear after another was discovered. When Fred Berry found a little red nubbin, and claimed his reward from the hands, or rather from the lips, of Jane Martin, the courage of Phebe Fergus sunk to zero. He would go

home with Jane, and Phebe's momentous question was, Had she better tag on with them, or accept the escort of George Jones?

"There, there, boys; that will do; you have done a good job; never mind the scraps, let us go and see if we cannot find something for the inner man," said the cheery Mr. Carson, as some of them were gathering up the few remaining stalks, more for the purpose of clearing up the floor than for the sake of the corn.

He led the way to the house, followed by the jolly huskers, each of whom meant to claim a girl, red ear or no red ear.

"Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!"

The deafening cheers reached the house, but the women did not have as many nerves in those days as their granddaughters have now. They were not disturbed. They simply waited. They all waited patiently, and some of them expectantly.

A half dozen schoolboys came bounding in at the back door, with Paul Martin in the lead. "I've got it! I've got it!" he shouted.

No one asked what he had got, but they stepped aside and made room for him as he passed through the house out into the front yard. He slipped up behind Phebe Fergus, and kissed her with all the enthusiasm of boyhood, before she had time to resent the impudence.

"Let me be!"

"Get out of the way; Phebe is my girl," said George Jones.

"She is as much mine as yours. I found a red ear, fair and square, and had as much right to kiss her as you had," replied Paul with spirit.

"Hail, Columbia, happy land, the greenie," exclaimed George indulgently.

"Phebe's popular," laughed one of the girls. Phebe burst into tears.

"Hello! what's up?" inquired Mr. Carson, as he came upon the group.

"Paul Martin kissed Phebe, and George Jones put in his say, and she is crying because she cannot have both of them," was the eager explanation.

"This will never do, Paul. Can't you find a girl of your own?"

"I found Phebe."

"Yes, but George got her first. You must never take another fellow's girl. You know the good book says: 'Thou shalt not steal.'"

"I thought you could kiss anybody you wanted to," replied sixteen-year-old Paul, rather abashed.

After a general laugh at his expense, all went into the house and attacked the late supper which had been prepared for them.

Then came the "frolic," as they called it. Old-fashioned country sports, such as "blindman's buff" and "the button," were the exciting games in which they indulged.

Talk about the city late hours! It was an early hour in the morning when those country youths and maidens wended their steps in the direction of the parental domiciles.

Before starting each young man secured the company of a young woman for the homeward walk, those who had found the red ears always selecting the girls whom they had kissed.

In accordance with that eminently wise and proper custom, George Jones sought Phebe and said: "May I have the honor of seeing you safe home?"

"O George, I would rather you would not. Mother would not like it. She told me to be sure to go home with Jane Martin. She never would let me go any place again."

"All right," replied the accommodating young man, "I do not want to make you any trouble;" and he turned away hastily, that no one might know that he had been given the "mitten."

He soon found that Martha Roberts was not afraid of her mother, and so readily accepted his escort.

Fred Berry and Jane Martin had just gone out of the door, when Phebe exclaimed: "Where is Jane?"

"She is gone."

"Without me?"

"It seems so."

"O dear, I asked her, and she said she would be glad to have me. I did not think that she would go off and leave me after that."

She tried to conceal her distress as she hesitated what to do.

"Do you want to go with her?" whispered Paul to George.

“No, I am going with Martha Roberts.”

Paul had never taken a girl anywhere in his life, but he plucked up courage and said: “Come on, Phebe; I’ll see you through the woods.”

There was nothing else for her, so she reluctantly went with the boy whose sister had mischievously left her, for the accommodation, as she supposed, of George Jones.

When Ellen White reached home, before retiring to rest, she opened an inside door and said: “Mother, mother, are you awake? What do you think? Paul Martin went home with Phebe Fergus.”

CHAPTER IV.

THE FIRST COMMUNION.

“ON two weeks from next Sabbath we will have our spring communion. The Rev. James McMillan is expected to assist. All persons wishing to unite with the Church on that occasion will meet the session the Saturday previous at twelve o'clock.”

Such was the announcement made by the Rev. Dr. Taggart, the pastor of Pigeon Creek Presbyterian Church, a few months after Carson's corn husking. The winter had been prolific of results. There had been other corn huskings and singings and spelling matches and rural amusements to the hearts' content of the young people who projected them, attended them, and made them a success. Much had been accomplished. Many bushels of corn had been husked, and many cords of wood had been chopped. Many hard words had been spelled, and the congregational singing had been greatly improved. The young people had been instructed and entertained. Boys and girls of sixteen were glancing eagerly toward the future. Many of them were thinking seriously of their eternal interests. Parents were faithful, and carefully instructed their children in the Bible, the Catechism, and the Confession of Faith. They

were instructed as they should have been, in the peculiar doctrines of the Church in which they were reared. Not much was said about conversion, for their religion was one of belief and action, rather than feeling.

The Sabbath preceding the communion was called "preparation Sabbath," and Dr. Taggart preached a long and able sermon from the words: "I am the living bread, which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

It was an orthodox sermon, Christ the Bread of Life. The people were fed and strengthened. It was a fitting prelude to the solemnities of the coming Sabbath, and it was discussed more or less around every hearthstone, when, as was usual, the questions were asked, which consisted in a formal recitation of the Shorter Catechism. The head of the house invariably asked the questions just before family worship every Sabbath evening.

The mother generally took her turn with the children in answering, and guests who remained over the Sabbath did not escape. In the humble abode of Joseph Martin the question "What is required to the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper?" fell to Paul.

"It is required of them that would worthily partake of the Lord's Supper, that they examine themselves, of their knowledge to discern the Lord's body, of their faith to feed upon him, of their re-

pentance, love, and new obedience; lest, coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment to themselves."

"What is prayer?"

"Father, before you go on, I would like to ask you a little about my question," stammered Paul.

Mr. Martin was startled, and it would have been difficult to have told which was the more embarrassed.

"Yes, certainly, to be sure. Hadn't we better finish the questions and have worship, and let the youngsters get to bed, and then we can talk it over?"

"I expect we had."

After the younger children were all snugly in bed, Mr. Martin returned to the subject by asking: "What is it, Paul, that you wanted to ask about?"

"I am not sure that it is of any great importance. The question that I wanted to ask is: If so much is required of those who belong to the Church, is it not about as well to stay out, and run no risk of eating and drinking judgment to ourselves?"

"No. Out of the Church you run the risk of hell and damnation."

"Is no one saved but Church members?"

"I did not say that. It is not for me, a worm of the dust, to limit the grace of God. We have Scripture authority for saying that there is no salvation out of Christ. If a man is in Christ, he has a right to be, and ought to be, in the Church."

"But if he is not fit to belong?"

“No man is fit to go to heaven who is not fit to go to the communion table.”

“Am I fit for either?”

“I declare, Paul, I do not know. I did not know you were thinking of those things. It is a question for yourself to decide, you and your God.”

“I think I know enough—that is, I think I can answer all the questions they will be likely to put to me—but I am not sure that I am good enough.”

“It is a solemn thing, Paul, a solemn thing.”

“Yes, I know it is. It may be that I had better wait awhile.”

“Do you believe?”

“I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that he died to save sinners.”

“Do you believe that he died to save you?”

“Yes, sir.”

Joseph Martin was greatly moved. He rose to his feet, and laid his hand upon his son's head as he said: “Paul, if I were you, I would go before the session Saturday.”

“I am thinking about it,” replied Paul.

A soul was struggling in the throes of the second birth. All that night Paul lay awake thinking. His thoughts were of God, of his Son, of the cross on Calvary, and of the eternal life that had been made possible for him by that awful tragedy. Life and death were set before him, and he chose that good part which would never be taken from him.

In the morning he sought an opportunity and said: "Father, I have decided to go before the session."

"That is right. Take the vows of God upon you. Walk in the ways of the Lord all the days of your life, and you shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

On Saturday morning every one in the congregation got up earlier than usual. Friday had been religiously observed as a fast day. The public services were to begin on Saturday at one o'clock, which necessitated an early dinner, and there was more than the usual amount of other work to do in most households.

Mrs. Fergus was not in very good health, and she suggested that Phebe remain at home and attend to the domestic affairs, so that there would be no need of bustle or hurry, which always so upset her that she could not enjoy the sermon when she reached the church.

"You will not mind staying; will you, Phebe?"

"No, I suppose not," hesitatingly.

"I thought you would not care, being you are not a member; but if you do, say so."

"I do not mind staying, mother, but I have wanted to tell you, I would like to—I would like to"—

"What would you like, child?"

"I would like to join the Church."

"Why, Phebe! Phebe, I am surprised. Do you feel prepared?"

“I hope so, I have thought about it for a good while. It may be that we cannot get there in time, there is so much to do.”

“O yes, we can. If you feel it your duty, you can go; the work can wait. The session meets at twelve o’clock. We will not have any regular dinner; we will just take a piece before we start, and that will save time.”

“You need not all go so early. I can walk.”

“I do not like to hear you talk that way, Phebe. Do you think we begrudge going an hour early when you want to join the Church?”

“No, mother; I know you do not, but there is so much to do, I am afraid we can not get ready.”

“Are your clothes all in good order?”

“Yes, ma’am.”

“Is there anything new you need?”

“No, ma’am.”

“Never mind the baking. You had better go into the room and look over your questions a little, and the Confession of Faith; they might ask you something on that.”

“Mother, I know the Catechism backward. I would rather help you with the work than to have you all tired out.”

“You were always a good girl, so thoughtful. I am glad you are coming into the household of faith.”

Mr. Fergus came into the kitchen, searching for some nails to repair a gate.

“Can we get off an hour early, father? Phebe wants to go before the session.”

“Phebe?”

“Yes, Phebe. She is young, but not too young to know what she is about. She offered to walk to the church, but it is so far we must not let her think of that.”

“No, no, of course not; the boys can help you women with the work; I will send Andy in right away to do the churning.”

“It is putting you all to trouble,” remonstrated Phebe.

“No, it is not. I like that kind of trouble. I am glad to see you taking this step. The work is no consideration. ‘Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.’”

David Fergus mended the gate with a happy heart. He oiled the wagon, and harnessed the horses long before the time for starting. He felt it his duty to talk to Phebe; but, not quite knowing what to say, he contented himself with neglecting his own work and helping in the house, that they might all get off without any one being frustrated. When they arrived at the church, he went in with Phebe and explained the situation to the pastor, who was the only one who had reached the place before themselves. He quietly withdrew, and with his wife made a short call on an old man, who lived but a stone's throw from the church, and who was so crippled from a fall that he could

scarcely walk. The two boys strolled through the forest, glad that their sister was identifying herself with the people of God.

Sabbath morning dawned clear and calm. It was the first Sabbath in May, and, as usual upon such occasions, the services were held in the grove. The Rev. James McMillan preached from the text: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

At the close of the discourse there was an intermission of half an hour, after which the people gathered together to celebrate the great feast. The pastor "fenced the table." He rehearsed the Commandments one after another in regular order, and excluded from the privileges of the Supper all who had violated any one of them. It was a season of rigid self-examination. Small pieces of lead, called "tokens," had been previously given to all the members of the church, in good and regular standing, who had applied to the pastor or any of the elders for them. They were also given to members of sister congregations who were present, if they were properly vouched for. In addition to those precautions, the elders stood at the entrance to the table, that no improper person might approach. When everything was ready the pastor announced: "Those who have received tokens will now come forward, with humility and prayer, to the table of the Lord, and show forth his death till he come." A procession marched in, single file, father, mother, then the children in

the order of their ages. When all were seated, and the tokens were collected, they were addressed on the nature and design of the ordinance they were about to celebrate. After that the minister took the bread, and said: "That same night in which he was betrayed, our blessed Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, took bread and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said: 'Take, eat, this is my body.'"

There was a stillness like unto the stillness of death resting on the assembled multitude as he handed the broken bread to those nearest him, and the elders passed down the sides of the table with the plates that all might be quietly served. The silence was broken with: "And he took the cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying: 'Drink ye all of it.'"

Other elders passed with the urns of wine. All was hushed. The people were communing with God—not in words alone, but in deed and truth. They were dismissed with a few well-chosen words to make room for others. When all were through they united in singing:

"The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want.
He makes me down to lie
In pastures green, he leadeth me
The quiet waters by."

There were the concluding services on Monday, and as the Rev. James McMillan was on his way to his home he stopped to make a pastoral visit. He was asked about the Pigeon Creek Church,

and also how many accessions there were at that communion.

“Only two. Joseph Martin’s son Paul was one, and the daughter of David Fergus was the other. I think her name is Phebe.”

“Yes, he only has one girl, and her name is Phebe.”

CHAPTER V.

AT COLLEGE.

“FATHER, I should like to go to college,” said Paul, one morning a few weeks after he had united with the Church.

“That would be a big undertaking. I want you to look up in the world and set your mark high, but it is not worth while for you to waste your ammunition shooting at the moon.”

“I am not shooting at the moon, and am not thinking of it; I said I want to go to college.”

“It amounts to about the same thing. You cannot reach the moon, and you cannot go to college.”

“Why not?”

“You ought to know. It takes money, for one thing. How much have you got?”

“You know I have not got any, but you might talk about it.”

“There is no use in wasting time talking about the impossible.”

“I thought it might be made possible.”

“I think it cannot.”

Mr. Martin did not wait for further argument. He was not only surprised, but he was very greatly annoyed. Paul was his oldest son, and a good boy, and he was willing to grant any reasonable

request; but he was a poor man, and could not afford to give his son a classical education.

His earthly possessions consisted of the farm on which he resided, and it required industry and thrift and economy to support his large family in any degree of comfort. Although he wanted to lay by something for a rainy day, he was quite willing to help the children whom God had given him all he could, but that was beyond the limit of his means or his patience. He hoped that Paul would never think of it again, or, if he did, that he would never mention it. He forgot that his own Scotch-Irish Presbyterian blood coursed through the veins of his child, and that he had taught him the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. Paul was ambitious and did not like agricultural pursuits, neither did he want to learn a trade. He had a good opinion of his own mental powers, thought he possessed talent, perhaps genius, and needed intellectual training. He had a vague idea of carving out fame and fortune for himself in the near future, and he believed that a collegiate education would furnish him with the tools with which to do the work with ease and grace and dignity, and, once properly equipped for the undertaking, he would accomplish the desirable result with credit to himself and his friends. Failing to secure even a hearing from his father, he appealed to the power behind the throne. "Mother, what do you think of my going to college?"

“What?”

“I want to go to college.”

“We have all heard that long ago.”

“Can I go?”

“You have my consent. You can go and welcome.”

“Now, mother, you know what I mean.”

“I am not sure that I do. Suppose that you explain fully, and let me know just what you do want, and what you would do if you had your own way.”

“I would go to college to-morrow.”

“I know that, but that is out of the question. You ought to have some definite plan, and I will help you if I can.”

“Mother, you are a jewel. Will you really help me?”

“I said I would help you if I could. I am not sure that I can. Why are you so anxious for a better education than any of your friends have had? Do you want to make a preacher?”

“No, I do not.”

“What do you want to made of yourself?”

“I do not know yet. I want the schooling first. I just hate this farming, I hate to plow and to sow and to reap, and the whole everlasting business.”

“I am afraid you are inclined to be lazy, and are wanting to get into some easy way of making a living.”

“No, I am not. I am not thinking of making money. If I was, I would start a store and specu-

late; that would be better than hoeing corn. Do you suppose father would let me get a place to clerk in a store?"

"No, I do not. Your father needs your help on the farm."

"And I hate the life. I would rather be a blacksmith. I wish father would hire me out to something that I could stand, and take the money and hire a hand to do my work on the farm."

"I do not like to hear you express such sentiments. Your father is a farmer, and his father before him was one. So was mine. It is the most respectable calling in the world. It is the most honorable and the most independent. You ought to be ashamed to talk about being a blacksmith."

"What disgrace is there in shoeing a horse?"

"There is none, I suppose, but it is not pleasant work."

"I would rather do it than plow or hoe corn. I would not do either if I could help myself."

"I am sorry that you are so discontented. I wish that we were able to give you a good education. Poor as we are, I would be willing to strain every nerve, and trust the future to God, if you felt called to preach, and wanted the learning to prepare you for your sacred calling."

Paul rushed from his mother's presence. He had met with the first great temptation of his life, and she, without intending it, without even knowing it, was the temptress. He knew that he had to utter but one sentence to accomplish his heart's

desire, and that sentence would express a noble purpose, a high and holy aim in life, and could be told in half a dozen words: "I want to be a preacher."

He did not want to preach, and he did not for a moment think of becoming a minister. He would have been appalled at the idea of his ever occupying a pulpit. He did think, not only for a moment, but for hours and days, of the possibility of going to college, with the avowed purpose of making a preacher, and when he was through he could change his mind, or something might happen that it would not be expected of him. He deliberately placed the lie in one side of the scales and a classical education in the other. He hesitated, and, in common with the rest of humanity, while he hesitated he was in danger. While he was hesitating, and the lie of the present and the glory of the future were trembling in the balance, his father laid his hand upon his head and said: "My son, your mother and I have been talking about you. We have prayed over you. If God has called you to labor in his vineyard, far be it from us to put a stumbling-block in your way. He has said that the silver and the gold are his, and that the cattle upon a thousand hills are his. If he has called you, we will put our trust in him for the means."

"Father, I—I—I have not said I am called to preach."

"No, but your mother thinks from your actions that you feel that you are. You must not be afraid

of us. God has highly honored us in calling our firstborn son to the sacred desk. We will help you all we can."

Mr. Martin was a consistent Christian. He believed that all things were possible with God; and if he wanted Paul, he could and would provide the means for his education. He had carefully prepared himself for that interview, which caused Paul to have another struggle, more severe than the first, but it was sooner over.

The lie went down, heavy as iron, college went up as light as a feather. He did not want it and would not have it at such a price. One rainy day when there was not much that could be done on the farm he told his father that he would like to ride one of the horses to Dr. Taggart's, and added: "I want to have a talk with him."

"Certainly you can have the horse. I am glad you want to see Dr. Taggart. You will find him a wise and safe counselor. I hope that you may be guided by wisdom from on high."

Dr. Taggart gave him a cordial reception, which helped him to open his business.

"Doctor, I came over to talk to you about going to college. Do you think I can ever make anything of myself if I had a chance?"

"My dear boy, I know that God can make a great deal of you if you give him a chance."

"Then you think it would not be altogether time and money thrown away if father can manage to send me?"

"Most assuredly not, if you are called of God."

"Called to what?"

"Called to preach the everlasting gospel, the good news of salvation, the glad tidings of great joy."

"I am not wanting to be a preacher."

"Not wanting to preach? What do you want to go to college for?"

"I want an education."

"I am surprised. I understood from your father that you wanted to preach. An education is a good thing so far as it goes, but it is hardly worth while to take a regular course unless you intend to study a profession. Latin and Greek would not be of much use to you on the farm."

"I agree with you on that point. I want to get away from the farm. I thought you might have some influence with father, and persuade him to give me an education, without being obliged to become a preacher."

"I am not so sure about that. What would you like to be? How would you like to be a doctor? Good doctors are needed in the world next to preachers."

"I am only a boy. I am only a little over sixteen years old. It is hardly fair that I should be required to say now what I may decide to do when I become a man. I want an education to prepare me for something that I would like better than farming."

“I see, I see. ‘Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.’ And it may happen that you will want to preach.”

“Then I will preach, or at least I will try it, but I do not want to be bound to try it whether I want to or not.”

“Exactly. I believe you are right. I was afraid you wanted to be a lawyer. I am glad you do not. You would find it uphill work to mix law and religion, and I know you have the religion. I would not consent for you to be a lawyer, but you might get your literary education, and then you could decide between theology and medicine. Either profession is honorable.”

Paul discreetly avoided the subject of law, and said: “I want a college education; and if father can be induced to let me have it, I will never expect anything more from him; and after I get it I will do all I can for him and for the rest of the children. I should be very thankful if you would see him about it.”

“I will do that,” said Dr. Taggart. “I am glad that you aspire to something high in life, and I hope you will realize your highest aspirations.”

Dr. Taggart saw Mr. Martin.

The father and pastor took counsel together, and prayed together for the boy who was so dear to their hearts. It was decided that he should have the culture and training that he so badly wanted. Many were the sacrifices made in the humble home, that they might be obtained. Each one of

the children contributed his mite to bring about the desired result. Jefferson College, in the classic village of Canonsburg, was selected as the one best suited to his wants. Mr. Martin visited the place, which was only twenty miles distant, and made the preliminary arrangements. He engaged board in a boarding hall which accommodated about twenty-five young men. He would have preferred to place his son in a private family, but he found that they were willing to take a good deal of farm produce at the hall in payment of bills, and that was a matter of very great consideration. On the day before the opening of the new term the farm wagon was brought out, and filled with apples and potatoes, turnips and cabbages, flour and meal, a ham of meat and a dozen chickens, several pounds of butter, five dozen eggs, and a jug of good cider vinegar. A small hair trunk containing Paul's wardrobe, a Bible, a Psalm book, a Catechism, and a few schoolbooks, was placed carefully in the front. Everything being in readiness, Mr. Martin mounted the seat whip in hand, and called out: "Come on, Paul!"

Paul was dressed in his school clothes, made by his mother, of homemade cloth. He shook hands with his younger brothers and sisters, and turned to Jane.

"I hate to leave you, Jane. You have always been a good sister to me."

"And you have always been a good brother, Paul."

He advanced a step and kissed her, perhaps for the first time in his life. "Good-by, Jane. Where is mother?"

"She is out at the wagon, talking to father," replied his sister Annie. "I want a kiss as well as Jane; I'm a good sister, too."

"Kiss me!"

"And me!"

Paul good-naturedly kissed every one of them, and, half laughing, half crying, left the house.

"Good-by, mother."

"Good-by, Paul." She kissed him tenderly. It was his first leave-taking. Neither shed a tear, although both felt deeply. Paul was determined that his mother should not see him cry, and she was equally determined that he should not see how bad she felt.

The horses moved slowly off, as the children recovered their scattered wits and came trooping out of the house. They shouted good-by until they were hoarse. The last they saw of Paul he was standing up in the wagon, with his back to the horses, his hat in one hand, and waving a gaudy cotton handkerchief with the other. As the wagon rattled past the farmhouses everybody went out to say good-by and wish him Godspeed. When they reached the little log schoolhouse the master gave an extra recess, that all the pupils might have an opportunity of seeing him and speaking to him. He held an informal reception, although no one thought of calling it by that name. He shook

hands with all, some of whom were as old as himself.

"Ain't you going to kiss Phebe!" inquired a roguish youth.

"No, I guess not; take good care of her. I will kiss her when I come back."

"We'll treat her all right, don't you be scared."

"Good-by, master. I have been in your school three years. I am much obliged to you for all you have done for me."

"You are welcome, very welcome. I have done nothing more than my duty. Farewell, Paul. Make a man of yourself."

"I shall try to."

Hands were unclasped, and the wagon passed on. A moment later the master's ruler called the subdued pupils back to study. They were better scholars all that day and for many days after because one of their number had gone to college.

When the Martins reached the sleepy little burg, and drew in the reins at the hall, Jonathan Mills, the proprietor, went out to receive them. After exchanging a friendly greeting, Mr. Martin introduced Paul by saying: "That's your landlord; this is my boy."

Mills extended his hand. "Hearty-looking boy. How do you do, sir? Glad to see you. Light, and go right in. I will hitch your horses to this post until John comes home, and he will look after them."

"We have got some eatables for you. I thought,

being we were coming in the wagon, we might as well bring a little to begin with. I hope they will suit you."

"O yes, all right. Glad to get them. We cannot live without eating, in this town."

A young man came up the street and entered the gate.

"Hold on, Mr. Smith; this is Mr. Martin, come to college."

The young men bowed.

"Take him up with you, please; he is to room across from you, with Hornsby.

The students disappeared; and Mills, assisted by Martin, took out the supplies and carried them into the kitchen. An inventory was taken of quantities and values, and a list retained by each of the parties. During the six years that Paul lived in that hall no misunderstanding or difference in accounts ever occurred. Those were the days of old-fashioned hospitality, and Mr. Martin dined with his son, and his horses were fed, for which no pay was accepted.

Paul had been brought up in a community in which there was no caste; any man was as good as any other man if he behaved himself. Everybody did behave, hence all were, as the Declaration of Independence declares, free and equal. That early training was a great benefit to him, for, while he was not accustomed to many of the ways and customs of good society, as found in his new village home, there was a manly independence

about him which compensated in a great measure for what he lacked. He treated his fellow-students with respect, and exacted similar treatment from them. There were too many farmers' boys among them for him to pine for congenial society. He sought an introduction to the president and the professors, and, having found out what was expected of him, he made an honest effort to come up to their expectations. He entered the classical course, which would require six years of close application and good health on his part to complete. He gave the necessary time to his business and did his work well, at the same time he kept his eyes and ears open, and learned much that was not in the books, and some things that were not in the classical course, or in any other course laid down in the curriculum of study.

He lent a willing hand whenever there was any fun brewing. Any sport not a violation of the rules always found him ready; and although a rule was sometimes badly bent by a set of boisterous boys, if Paul was in the crowd it was never snapped quite in two. He studied his lessons thoroughly, attended church regularly, and contracted no bad habits nor any bad debts, and was sent home at the end of the first year with a perfect record. He was the lion of Pigeon Creek Church. Dr. Taggart expressed the feelings of the people when he prayed in the pulpit: "We thank thee, O God, that the young man who went out from among us to attend the institution of learn-

ing of thine own appointment has not fallen by the way, but has been returned unto us in thine own good time.”

He was not proud nor stuck up, as some of his friends feared he might be. He was glad to get home, and took pleasure in telling them all so. Time proved that he had not forgotten how to work, and also that he had not grown lazy, for he helped with all the work on the farm, and did much about the house.

One morning Mr. Beck went to Martin's to borrow a scythe. “Well, Paul, have you made up your mind what you are going to make of yourself? Going to be a preacher?”

“No, I think I will be a lawyer,” replied Paul laughingly.

“Tut, tut, boy; there is no law wanted in this country.”

“Why, Mr. Beck, what would we do without law?”

“We would do just as we have been doing all along; we would do right, that is what we would do.”

“Law is right.”

“Sometimes it is, and sometimes it is not. Be you going to be a lawyer sure?”

“No, I do not know what I will be. It is a long way ahead.”

“Yes, it is; but think about it, though. I hope you will feel yourself called to stand in the sacred desk and proclaim the everlasting gospel to a dying world. Nothing higher than that.”

“I know it.”

“You will think about it?”

“Yes.”

He received a great deal of advice and many encouraging words from his old friends and neighbors, all of whom were glad to see him, and all of whom wished him well. One thing startled him, and that was that so many expressed the hope that he would feel called to preach. He had never felt any such call, and never expected to, and he hoped that he had never said or done anything that had led those people to believe that he intended to be a preacher. He knew that his father was educating him, but he did not know that Pigeon Creek congregation was praying for him. He returned to college followed by the good will and benedictions of the whole church to which he belonged.

CHAPTER VI.

A COUNTRY WEDDING.

WHEN Fred Berry left Jane Martin at her own door the night of Carson's corn husking he summoned up enough courage to ask her if he might call on her at some future time. Permission was granted, and he became a frequent visitor at the Martin hearthstone. He sympathized with Paul in his literary aspirations, and used his influence—what little he had—in smoothing that young man's pathway to fame. Paul was duly grateful, and he welcomed him whenever he had leisure to drop in a few minutes, on his own account as well as his sister's. Fred was husbanding his small resources with a careful hand, that he might be able to procure a little home, in which he hoped to install Jane as mistress when she became his wife. He was a sensible young man. He knew that neither he nor a wife could live on air. His people and her people had their hands full. He had no aspirations beyond a farm. He sighed for a few acres to plow. He wanted nothing better in life than an opportunity to earn bread for himself and for her in the sweat of his brow, by tilling the soil. He worked on, hoping for a better day, while he succeeded in saving a little of his small earnings. When James Smith died, and his wife decided that she and her

children could not successfully manage her little farm, she offered it for sale. Fred bought the place with his father's consent and hearty approval. It consisted of a few acres, on which was built a very small house.

Smith had succeeded in making a living, and Fred felt sure that he could do as much, and perhaps more. His engagement was not published in the county papers, neither was it formally announced, but it was generally understood. Neither Fred nor Jane took as much interest in corn huskings or quiltings as they had formerly done. If their services were needed, they were always willing to help, but Jane was never happier than she was at home, where she spent much time in piecing quilts for herself. Fred continued to give his time and attention to the little farm, that his prospective brother-in-law would have heartily despised. Money was saved in the Martin home to give Jane a suitable bridal outfit. A great many things were provided from the family supplies, but she would be obliged to have some new clothes, including at least two new dresses, and that required money.

Paul knew that Fred was paying very marked attention to his sister, and that those attentions would probably, almost certainly, result in a union of hands and hearts and the founding of a new home. He had no protest to make. He was having his way in regard to his own life, and he was quite willing that they should be happy in theirs.

He could not quite understand their patience. He knew that it was a very wise proceeding to wait until they had accumulated something to start with, but it seemed to him that the realization of their hopes must be very far in the future. At the end of his freshman year he found on his return that Fred had bought a farm and fate was smiling propitiously.

“Jane, when are you and Fred going to get married? I hope it will be this vacation.”

“Not this summer.”

“It ought to be. You ought to have the wedding while I am at home.”

“What difference will that make?”

“It will make a great deal. I want to witness the ceremony. I want to be the groomsman, and stand up with you.”

“I am sorry we cannot accommodate you, but I am afraid we cannot.”

“What are you waiting on? Are you going to wait until Fred gets his farm paid for?”

“O no, not that long.”

“Will you be ready next vacation?”

“I expect so.”

“All right. Tell Fred I will take pleasure in being his waiter on the happy occasion;” and Paul started toward the gate.

“Paul.”

“What?”

“Come back! I want you a minute.”

He returned and asked mischievously: “What

is it? Has Fred treated you badly? Do you want my brotherly protection?"

"No, I do not; I have a notion not to tell you, but"—

"But you think you had better. You are right; secrets are dangerous. Out with it."

"You will keep it?"

"O yes, you can depend on me. I will help you to keep it."

"I thought I ought to tell you while you are at home, and I may as well tell you now. We—we rather expect to be married this fall."

"That will not do; I will not stand it."

"Why not?"

"I want to be on hand. How could you get married without me?"

"You can come home. Father can go after you."

"Yes, I suppose I can, on such an important occasion. You might hurry up while I am here. I will kill the turkey, and chop wood, and go for the preacher, and make myself generally useful."

"I am not sure that we will be ready in the fall, but we may. Don't say anything about it."

"I will not. I am sure that not a soul suspects it. He has only been going with you a little over three years."

Before he returned to school he spoke to Jane again about her approaching marriage, and requested her not to fail to have their father or Tom go for him.

He had never gone home except in vacation, and seldom heard from the home folks, except when his father came with provisions, unless he accidentally met some one who had been there and had been intrusted with some unimportant verbal message. He had now reached his sophomore year, and he was surprised one day when he received a letter. He was nearly twenty years old, and it was the first letter that had ever been sent to his address. He was told that it had been left at the hall while he was at school, by a man who had stayed overnight at his father's. Wonderingly he broke the red wax which fastened the edges of the paper together. Having ascertained from the signature that it was from his father, he commenced its perusal with fear and trembling, and read as follows:

My Dear Son: Your sister Jane is to be married on next Wednesday at eleven o'clock. It being the first wedding in the family, of course we would be glad to have you with us. It may be that you can get a horse without costing you much; if not, I know you will be able to foot it, if you want to come as bad as we want you here. If things were in better shape, we would go for you; but if you have to walk, we can take you back. All well.

Your affectionate father,

JOSEPH MARTIN.

Paul gave a prolonged whistle.

“What is it?” inquired Hornsby.

“A wedding.”

“Your girl?”

“My sister.”

“O, old folks agreed?”

“Yes.”

“Then it is all right.”

“O yes. I have been expecting it, but I was not looking for it just now.”

After a few minutes' silence Paul looked up. “Tom, do you know where I can get a horse for a day or two?”

“You might get White's. It is not fit to ride, but it is a good driving horse. Are you going to the wedding?”

“Yes, I will go if I have to walk.”

“It is a long distance for that.”

“Not so far when it is home and your sister is going to be married.”

“Can't you invite your roommate?”

“Yes, I shall be glad to have you.”

“Thank you, but as it is not my home, nor my sister, I am afraid it is too far for me.”

Martin took his letter to the president, Dr. Brown, and asked for leave of absence, which was cordially granted, it being the first favor of that kind he had asked during his connection with the school.

“How are you going?” inquired the learned doctor sympathetically.

“I do not know yet. I may have to walk. If so, I will go to-morrow. I can get White's horse free of charge, but Hornsby says it is not fit to ride. If I had a horse, I could go Wednesday morning, and get there in time. The roads are good.”

“Hornsby is right about that horse, but we must

not let you walk. Let me see; wait a minute," mused the professor.

Paul waited.

"I have no horse. I had a good one, but I sold him a year ago. However, I have a strong, light, serviceable little wagon. You might hitch White's Charley to it, and drive him down. Students do not need much female society; but if you think it will be too lonesome, you might take your landlord's daughter along for company."

Harriet Mills was a romping schoolgirl of fifteen when Martin went to her father's to board. She was now a dignified young lady of nineteen. She never flirted with the students, but there was a sort of an idea among them that she belonged to Hornsby. Paul thought that it would be pleasant to have her with him, and he knew it would create a sensation in his rural home. He did not know that Hornsby had told Dr. Brown about the wedding and had inquired about the wagon, and that the benevolent suggestion in regard to Miss Harriet was a deliberate plan of the old gentleman to keep his roommate at his books. The president was not in favor of the students spending much time with the young ladies of the village, as it was apt to take their minds from their studies; but Martin was not much of a ladies' man, and he could be trusted not to let it hurt him. Meeting Hornsby on the stairs, he began at once: "I am going to take White's Charley and Dr. Brown's little wagon. I have a notion to invite Miss Harriet to go with

me. I should like to have company. What do you say?"

"Me? I say I will go myself, if you have got a wagon. You asked me first."

"You asked yourself."

"Well, if you do not want me, if I cannot possibly go, I will give Miss Harriet my place;" and Tom sauntered on.

Wednesday morning found every one in the Martin homestead in a state of blissful anticipation. The turkey was browned to a turn, and the table was set for dinner. There was nothing more to do but to wait the time for the ceremony. Some of the guests had arrived, and Dr. Taggart was just dismounting, when George Jones exclaimed: "I declare, there is Paul; he has brought a girl!"

Harriet Mills attracted more attention than the bride. She was a stranger, a town lady, and, above all else, she was Paul Martin's girl. She enjoyed the day very much. She respected those plain country people, and was grateful to Paul for having taken her. She had often talked with him, and when introduced to Phebe Fergus she extended her hand, saying: "I have often heard Paul speak of you."

"I hope he did not say anything bad."

"No, indeed; he never says anything unkind of any one."

Poor Phebe! she thought that Harriet was just about ready to marry Paul, and, although it was a matter that did not concern her, she was scarcely

able to endure the knowledge that they were living in the same house. He had been under the influence of her charms for more than three years, and nothing else could have been expected, but somehow it hurt her.

She must bear it and make no sign. She went out on the front porch to get a breath of fresh air in the early twilight. The guests were all gone except Paul and Harriet, and she had been persuaded to remain and help entertain them. George Jones still lingered, and he joined her.

“Ain’t he struck?”

“Who?”

“Paul.”

“She is nice-looking.

“I bet she is nice. Paul would not have any other. If he is going to be a preacher, he will want a town lady for a wife. Paul looks high.”

“He has a right to.”

“Of course, and so have I, Phebe.”

“What?”

“I look up to you; I want you to be my wife.”

“George Jones!”

He placed his arm around her and drew her toward him.

“I never could raise the courage to tell you, Phebe, because I thought you had a hankering after Paul, but now I thought it may be that you would listen to a fellow.”

Just at that moment Paul went out to the porch for a quiet word with Phebe, but, seeing

George with his arm around her, he hastily withdrew.

Neither of them noticed him, but Phebe promised to be a sister to George, or something that amounted to about that, and he went home fully intending at some future convenient season to renew his suit, and he had hope of ultimate success if Paul kept out of his way.

Harriet made a sincere effort to make a friend of Phebe, but the quiet little country girl was unresponsive to her advances. She treated her politely, but was as cold as an icicle. Harriet could not help but notice that she was constrained and unnatural, but she did not know her well enough to ask any questions. When Paul found that his presence was not needed on the porch he retraced his steps to the kitchen, where his mother had not quite finished her domestic labors, which had been materially increased by the festivities of the day.

“Mother, are George and Phebe engaged?”

“Why, Paul!”

“Does that mean yes or no?”

“It does not mean either. I am surprised at your question. I never thought of such a thing. He does not go with her, but everybody says he would like to. Somehow, Paul, I have always thought that”—

“What?”

“That Phebe was cut out for you.”

“Why, mother, what put that in your head? I like Phebe, of course, but neither of us ever thought

of anything more. It will be years before I will be able to provide for a wife."

"Phebe is a good girl."

"Certainly. The world is full of good girls."

"Paul, come out and see my colt;" and his brother Tom hurried him away to admire the colt, that he could scarcely see in the fast growing darkness, leaving the good mother under the impression that Paul was lost to her and to Phebe and to all the old home life.

The next morning Harriet cordially invited Phebe to visit her in the near future. She gave a reluctant half promise, which she did not ever expect to fulfill. She had nothing against Harriet, nothing whatever, but she did not want to go to her home, and have her think that perhaps she was seeking an opportunity to see Paul. She had been going to Martin's all her life, and had never thought of Paul; but they were neighbors, and that made a great difference.

Paul and Harriet returned to Canonsburg, supplied with an abundance of cake, enough to dream over, and a generous slice for Dr. Brown, who immediately put it to a much more sensible use.

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Berry went to housekeeping in their own little house a few days after their wedding. They were as happy as if they had taken a tour around the world, and a great deal happier, because they wanted to live together in their own home, and they did not want to take a tour around the world, and would have been great-

ly distressed if the means had been furnished and they had been required to undertake such a journey. They took kindly to their new surroundings, and in their daily lives verified the inspiration of the scripture which says: "Godliness with contentment is great gain." In due course of time they had corn huskings and quiltings of their own. They were prosperous and happy, they felt that life was worth living, and they joyfully welcomed the olive branches that surrounded their table as a heritage of the Lord.

CHAPTER VII.

THE COMMENCEMENT.

DURING his entire six years at college Paul applied himself to his studies with a diligence that was commendable and even praiseworthy. He was aware of the sacrifices that were made in the unpretentious country home that he might have the advantages that he was enjoying. Those sacrifices were made ungrudgingly and with a degree of cheerfulness that could hardly have been expected of his younger brothers and sisters.

Paul seemed to have monopolized the literary ambition of the family. None of the other children wanted a classical education, and it was perhaps well for them that they did not. When Paul reached his senior year he was among the best scholars in his class. When they began to talk about the honors Martin's name was sure to be mentioned. He had studied for the training, but as his school life neared its close he began to consider the possibility and desirability of distinguishing himself as an honor man. It would delight his father and mother and the whole family. All Pigeon Creek would be proud of him, and it would gratify his own vanity, of which he had as much as was needed. He applied himself with renewed energy, and met his examinations with a confidence

that may have contributed something toward the success that crowned his efforts.

The students were called to meet in the chapel to hear the honors announced. The president of the Board of Trustees stepped to the front of the platform. Every young man was deeply interested, although only the seniors were personally concerned in the awards to be made. The presiding officer read a list of the names of those who had passed a satisfactory examination and were entitled to their degrees. It included every member of the class, which was an unusually large one. The report was received with loud applause. As soon as quiet was restored the official proceeded: "The following honors were also awarded: First honor, Valedictory, Paul Martin, of Pennsylvania." The cheers were deafening. The "preps," as the students of the first two years' work were called, seemed to be under the impression that their chances for future honors depended on the amount of noise they made in expressing their approbation. If such had been the case, it would have been necessary to have divided the honors, as all were equally entitled to them. A second, third, and fourth honor were conferred upon the young men whom the Board in its wisdom considered worthy to receive them, after which the president made a few remarks to the graduating class, congratulating them upon the work that had been so faithfully done, and informed them that no further class work would be expect-

ed of them. He told them that they would need the few remaining weeks of the term to prepare their Commencement orations, and he expressed an earnest hope that each one of them would be an honor to himself, to his family, and to his *Alma Mater*.

That ushered in the senior vacation. The young men who lived far from the temple of learning stayed in the village until after the Commencement, while those who lived within a convenient distance generally went home, and returned a day or two preceding the important occasion.

When they left the chapel the students gathered around Martin. A few were disappointed, and others were perhaps chagrined that the lightning had struck him; but they congratulated him with their lips, if the words did not well up from their hearts. The second honor man probably expressed the feelings of the others when he said: "I think I ought to have had it, but you came in next to me, and they only made a slight mistake. 'Tis human to err;' because they are human I forgive them."

Martin was a general favorite, and he was congratulated by the citizens on every hand. He received many pleasant glances from bright-eyed maidens who did not know him when he was a "prep," and who were just beginning to wake to the fact that he was a rising young man. Baskets of flowers were sent to his room, accompanied by notes requesting him to please accept them from admiring friends.

He had told his father that his duties were practically ended with the examination, and in a day or two his brother Tom drove up in the little wagon and took him home. He spent the first few days in visiting his old friends and receiving their congratulations. No one expressed the least surprise when told that he was the first honor man of his class. He asked himself if they would have expressed any disappointment if he had not taken any of the honors. They certainly had faith in him, and he resolved anew that they should not be ashamed of him on Commencement day, or at any future time.

After he had rested he settled down to the next duty, that of preparing his valedictory. He talked about a theme with his father and mother and some other friends. "Go and see Dr. Taggart," suggested his father. "He can give you plenty of subjects."

Martin acted on the advice.

"What are you going to make of yourself? Have you decided to preach?"

"O no."

"I am sorry for that. I have looked upon your college life as a sort of probation. I hoped you would feel the call before you got through. I hardly know about a subject for your oration. I am afraid I cannot help you much there."

"You have helped me; you have suggested one that I think will be the very thing. Let me think." The experienced doctor passed quietly from the

room. When he returned, he inquired: "Well, have you found a subject to suit you?"

"Yes."

"What is it?"

"Probation."

"A very good one. I hope you will handle it well. My library is at your service."

"Thank you."

Paul did not shirk his work, and when he returned to Canonsburg a couple of days before Commencement the valedictory was ready.

The exercises began at the unfashionable hour of nine o'clock in the morning. Long before the time people began to crowd into the chapel, that they might be able to get seats where they could see and hear. A few of the front seats were reserved for the families of the graduates, many of whom had made long and tiresome journeys, in uncomfortable stages, over rough roads, that they might be present. There was a large audience, and a great many were from Pigeon Creek congregation. Phebe Fergus was the guest of Harriet Mills by special invitation. Before starting to the college Harriet went into her room with two handsome bouquets.

"There, Phebe; take your choice. I am looking after Paul's flowers. You send him one, and I will send him the other."

"Why should I send him one?"

"Because you are his friend, and we want him to get the most. I would not have him come behind the rest for anything."

“It is new to me.”

“It is something new here; we never gave them flowers until last year, and they say the professors are going to put a stop to it, but we coaxed them up for to-day. You ought to have seen the one I sent Tom last year.”

“Who is Tom?”

“Tom Hornsby, my most particular friend. He boarded here six years.”

“O!”

Harriet's blushes revealed more than her words, and a great weight was that moment lifted from the heart of the little country girl at her side.

Martin had supplied his parents with tickets, and they were seated in the reserved seats. Notwithstanding the length of the programme, no one was tired when the presiding officer announced: “The next will be the valedictory by Mr. Paul Martin, of Pennsylvania; subject, Probation.”

Glancing toward the graduating class, he said: “Mr. Martin.”

Paul advanced to the front of the platform, and was met with a round of applause. After it had subsided, he began: “Life from the cradle to the grave is one continued probation.”

He knew what he wanted to say, and he said it with an earnestness that captivated his audience and convinced them that he meant every word that he said. He closed by saying: “Run well the race, faint not by the way, and thou shalt receive the crown.”

As he retired another storm of applause told him that his friends had not been disappointed in him. The ushers carried up the flowers, and Harriet and Phebe were delighted to see that he had as many as, if not more than, any of his predecessors.

Dr. Brown conferred the degrees in Latin, and some of Paul's neighbors wondered if the boy understood what was said to him. As he grasped his diploma Mrs. Martin nudged the woman beside her and said: "That is our boy." The woman smiled and nodded. She knew Paul, and she sympathized with the motherly pride of the matron, who wanted the world to know her relation to the hero of the hour.

The young men bowed their thanks.

Announcements for the next year were made. The benediction was pronounced, and another large class of young men was sent out into the world, armed and equipped, to make or mar their future.

CHAPTER VIII.

A CALL TO PREACH.

DURING the senior vacation Martin prepared his Commencement oration, and chose his life work. One morning when he went to Dr. Taggart's to examine a book that had attracted his attention that worthy gentleman surprised him when he asked: "Whom are you going to study under?"

"Study under?"

"Yes, Dr. Clark is as good a doctor as you will find, but I thought you might have some big notions in your head, and might not be satisfied with a plain country doctor. You may take my word for it, he can get you ready for the lectures, and do it as well as any doctor in town or city."

"I am not going to be a doctor."

"You are not? I thought that was settled. Are you going to preach?"

"No."

"What are you going to do?"

Martin hesitated. "I am not sure yet."

"You ought to be sure. I am astonished. Ready to take your diploma, and not sure what you are going to make of yourself. I would not advise you to preach if you do not feel called, and there is nothing else but medicine."

"And law."

“We want no law here. It is a delusion and a snare. You shall not be a lawyer. I told you that before you started to college. Do you remember?”

“I think I remember that you said something to that effect, but we came to no decision; it was left an open question to be settled in the future.”

“No, it was not. I never left law an open question; I settled that then and there. You were to follow the leadings of Providence; and if you did not feel the divine call, you were to be a doctor.”

“I did not understand it that way.”

“The rest of us did.”

“Who?”

“I did, and the whole congregation, besides your father and mother and all your family. Do you suppose they would have stinted and saved, and made the sacrifices they have done, for six years to educate you for the business of defrauding widows and orphans, and cheating and lying, and every sort of rascality?”

“You are prejudiced. Law is a noble profession. Why should a lawyer defraud a widow or an orphan or cheat, or lie, any more than a preacher or a doctor?”

“He is bound to defend the ones that do, and that is as bad. ‘The receiver of stolen goods is as bad as the thief.’”

“I will take the right side of my cases.”

“There is no right side to them. Lawing is a bad business. What does your father say?”

"I have not talked with him about it. I have not definitely decided yet."

"I am glad of that. It is a serious question. I hope you will be guided by wisdom from on high."

Paul went home feeling very uncomfortable. He was conscious that he had never said he was going to be either a preacher or a doctor. He felt that Dr. Taggart was right when he said it was about time he knew what he wanted. He finished his oration to his satisfaction, committed it to memory, practiced it alone in the woods and the meadows; and when he was sure it suited him, he turned his thoughts toward the future that was stretching out so invitingly before him. He asked himself why he wanted to be a lawyer, and answered the question conscientiously. He was not particularly inclined toward law. He did not want to preach, and he had no taste for medicine. He was ambitious. He wanted to make a name and place for himself. He wanted to have a share in the making of the laws, not that the laws might be improved, but that he might reap the reward and have a share in the honors. He noticed that it was the lawyers who were sent to the Legislature and to Congress. It was lawyers who were elected governors and senators, and it was lawyers who were appointed judges and sent as ambassadors. He wanted to rise in the world. He wanted to be somebody, and he wanted to be recognized at his full value. He went to see Dr. Clark.

“Doctor, if you are not busy, I want to talk with you. Can you spare a little time?”

“O yes; I have no dangerous cases on hand now. I am not going anywhere this afternoon. What can I do for you? Have you got the chills, or is your liver out of order?”

“Neither. I want your advice, not professional; yes, I believe I do want your professional advice in regard to a profession. I am not called to preach, and Dr. Taggart seems to regard law as the unpardonable sin. He insists that I must be a doctor. What do you think?”

“Are you called?”

“Called to what?”

“Called to be a doctor.”

“No. I did not suppose you had to be called to that. I supposed you learned that.”

“My dear young man, you have taken entirely too much for granted. Do you know anything about medicine?”

“No, I do not.”

“Has the effort to relieve suffering, or the attempt to discover its cause, a fascination for you?”

“No, no, I shrink from anything of that kind. I am perfectly helpless in the presence of the sick.”

“Then you are not fit for a doctor.”

“I knew I was not, but they all seem to take it for granted that I must either study theology or medicine. I hardly have a third choice.”

“What about law?”

“Dr. Taggart considers it the highway to ruin.”

"Is Dr. Taggart your guardian?"

"No, but father is of the same opinion."

"Dr. Taggart is a good man and a sound preacher, but he is prejudiced, and so is your father. They both have very narrow views of life, if you will excuse me for saying so."

"I will excuse you, for I agree with you. At the same time it is hard for me to ask father to send me to law school, when he regards it as preparing me for a life of sin and misery."

"You are mistaken there; he does not go that far. He will be disappointed, but he will forgive you."

"I am afraid not."

"Yes, he will. You are his son, and he will have to be lenient with you. Then I will help you out by telling him that it is not worth while for you to try to be a doctor, unless you have a natural aptitude for the work. Have you decided on law?"

"Not altogether. It seemed so utterly hopeless."

"I see nothing to hinder you, if your heart is set on it. If I were you, I should go to Washington, and see some of the lawyers. Do you know any of them?"

"I know Judge Long. He has been at the college several times the past two years."

"He is as good as any. It would be well to see him. Religion is Dr. Taggart's business, and medicine is mine. Judge Long can tell you more about law in an hour than we can in a year."

Martin went to Washington, the village where the county records were kept and the courts convened. He talked to several lawyers. Judge Long received him kindly, and he opened his heart to him as to a lifelong friend.

“I know I am not called to preach, and Dr. Clark says it is impossible to be a successful doctor unless I am called to that. I think I can make a lawyer.”

“You feel called to the bar?”

“What?”

“You feel called to the study of law, you feel that a higher power which you cannot resist impels you to seize the balances and hold them with a firm and steady hand?”

“I am not sure that I know what you are talking about.”

“I am talking about the legal profession. The world needs conscientious, upright lawyers, men who go into battle with the war cry: ‘Let justice be done, though the heavens fall.’ Do you want to enlist in that army?”

“Yes, I want to be on the side of justice.”

“You want to be an attorney for the opportunity it will afford you of doing good in the world.”

“No, I cannot say that exactly. I want a chance to amount to something in the world?”

“You are ambitious. Are you going to enter politics?”

“Not exactly, though I would not object to a good office, if one was offered me.”

“That might come in time. Office is the reward of faithful service. You will no doubt make a successful lawyer. It would be a good idea to attend court while you are in town.”

Martin attended a session or two, and was not very deeply impressed with the dignity of the attorneys. The subject of the litigation was the moving of a fence, that had been a division fence between two properties. The lawyers wrangled with each other, and harangued the court, until he was disgusted with the case, and pitied the judge, who was obliged to listen to it. As he left the courthouse he met Judge Long.

“How do you like it?”

“I do not like it at all. They are making as much fuss about that old fence as if it were a gold mine.”

“My dear sir, I am afraid you are not called to law.”

“That is not my idea of law. What difference does it make to those lawyers whether that fence is exactly where it ought to be or not?”

“None whatever.”

“Then why do they not let the men who are interested settle it between themselves? What are the lawyers after?”

“Their fees.”

“O, I would not want to make money that way.”

“I told you that you were not called,” replied the judge laughingly. “Why do you not preach?”

The honors come easier there, and would be more to your taste."

Martin was perplexed. The preacher to whom he had gone for advice had advised him to be a doctor, the doctor had sent him to a lawyer, and the lawyer suggested the pulpit. He had completed the circle, and was more at sea than when he started.

He asked himself what he could do, and he was not quite sure that he knew. He went home by way of Canonsburg. He wanted to see the boys, and he wanted particularly to see Dr. Brown. He poured out his hopes, or rather his doubts and fears, into the ears of the sympathetic doctor, who listened to him kindly and patiently.

The doctor knew him well, and was prepared to deal with him intelligently. "I think," said he, "that God intends everybody to do something. You do not want to lead a life of idleness."

"By no means."

"The great danger, perhaps the only danger, is that you will make a mistake in choosing your work. The worst failures in life are made in that way. If you want to be a lawyer, pray over it, and God will help you to know if that is what is best for you."

"Pray over it?"

"Certainly. Why not?"

"I hardly know. I should not have thought of praying over studying law."

"You are a Christian?"

"O yes."

"Then God is your father and he will direct your steps. I believe you have taken a prominent part in the students' prayer meeting. You must know the value of prayer. You are surely a praying man."

"Yes, but I would hardly be able to pray that I may be a successful lawyer and rise in the world, and go to Congress, or be sent as Minister to England."

"That is what you ought to be able to do, if that is what you want in life. It is a laudable ambition. You have no need to be ashamed to discuss it with God or man."

"You are different from Dr. Taggart. He considers lawyers sinners above all other sinners."

"Dr. Taggart is a good man, but he is narrow, very narrow. Does he want you to preach?"

"Not exactly. He said he would not want me to preach unless I am called. He wants me to be a doctor."

"What do you want?"

"That is what I am trying to find out. I have had a vague sort of an idea ever since I have been in college that I wanted to be a lawyer. Now that I am giving it serious thought I am not so sure."

"Have you ever thought of the ministry?"

"Yes, no—that is, father would like to have me preach, but I am not called to that."

"You mean that you would not like the work?"

“No, I do not mean that. You are a preacher. You ought to understand. I have always thought that God called some men to be preachers.”

“He does; and he calls some to be doctors, others to be lawyers, others to be farmers, and he has called some very good men to be carpenters.”

“I have not looked at it in quite that light. I thought there was a special call to preach.”

“There is, and there is also a special call to the carpenter. The call consists in being fitted for certain work. The boy that goes around with a hammer and nails is apt to be a carpenter; the one that rows and swims, and runs off to the creek, makes the sailor; the one that makes powders of flour becomes a doctor.”

“I hope I am called to something.”

“I do not believe that you are. If you were, you would know it. You would not be consulting Dr. Taggart about theology, and Dr. Clark about medicine, and Judge Long about law. You would know what you want, and you would go to work and do it.”

“What am I to do?”

“Do as I told you. Pray over it and listen for the call. You will be sure to hear it. You will not hear an audible voice, such as was heard by your illustrious predecessor, Saul of Tarsus, as he went down to Damascus, but you will know what your Heavenly Father wants you to do.”

Martin reached home a wiser young man than when he went to Washington. He went to God

with his trials and troubles as he had never done before. He felt that before Commencement he must come to some conclusion in regard to his future. He took counsel with his Father in heaven and listened for a call to something. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" was the earnest, sincere cry that came from the depths of his heart. The Spirit of God answered the cry and bore witness with his spirit.

While the Holy Spirit was wooing him to the ministry all Pigeon Creek congregation was praying for him. None of them knew of the deep waters through which he was passing. They only knew that he had not yet chosen his life work. Visions of the heights to which preachers sometimes attain passed before him. He thought of pastorates in flourishing city churches and of professorships in colleges and theological seminaries. Such thoughts yielded to an ardent desire to win souls for Christ. He received a call to preach, and he responded: "Abba, Father."

The morning after he graduated he went to see Dr. Brown to bid him good-by.

"Have you chosen a profession?"

"Yes."

"What is it?"

"I am going to try to preach."

Dr. Brown smiled. "Are you called?"

Martin laid his hand in the doctor's as he replied: "I am. Woe is me if I preach not the gospel."

CHAPTER IX.

ENGAGED.

MARTIN went home to stay until it was time to enter the seminary. He found that during his six years' absence he had lost much of his interest in farm life and the homely surroundings of his parental abode. He visited more than he had ever done in any other vacation, and he renewed his early friendship with Phebe Fergus. Nearly all the other girls were married, or going to be soon, so that he did not have much choice when it came to the society of young ladies. He found her better educated than he would have supposed possible with her limited advantages. Her culture was unmistakable and her self-possession remarkable. He went to see her on one little pretext or another every few days, and the more he saw of her the oftener he went. One afternoon he made the startling discovery that he was in love. He did not know it, and it might have taken him some time to have found it out, had he not been given a little gratuitous assistance by George Jones, who was still an ardent admirer of the little lady, and hoped against hope that she would sometime consent to be more than a sister. Paul was interfering sadly with his hopes, and George determined to find out if he was a rival for her hand, or only

a friend. He took a proper, manly course, and went to Paul for the information. "Are you in love with Phebe? Are you going to marry her?" he asked.

"Why—why—what is it to you?"

"It is my business just this far: I have been courting her, or trying to, for six years. I have not made much headway, but I still think there may be some chance if you do not want her. If you do, I may as well quit."

Martin hesitated, not knowing what to say. He loved Phebe, but he had never told her so, simply because he had not known it himself until then. He did not want to tell the man who had been trying to win her for six years that he had fallen in love with her within the last six weeks, and that he meant to appropriate her to himself. "George, I do not think you do me justice. I have been away all these years, and you have had a clear field so far as I am concerned. I have never spoken a word of love to her. If she will not have you, it is hardly fair to blame me."

"I am not blaming you, but I am glad you do not want her, I will see her once more;" and he started off.

"George!"

"Well."

"Tell me after you have seen her."

"What do you mean?"

"We had better understand each other. When I came home, I had never thought much about

love, and settling in life, for it was away in the future, you know; but since I have been home I have fallen in love with Phebe. She may not have me, we may be in the same boat, but you have loved her all these years, and you ought to have the first chance.”

“O, I have had my chance. I proposed to her the day that your Jane was married. Go ahead, and if you get her, you have not done any underhand work, and I will not lay up anything against you.”

Phebe was the first love of both the young men, and, although rivals for her hand, they parted friends; but those were the good old times, before people had learned to gain their ends by fair or foul means, and then be sorry forever after that they had succeeded. George went his way, and never indulged another hope of anything more than sisterly affection for Phebe. Paul went to see her that evening, as usual. Now that he was awake, he was very wide awake, and while he was not afraid of George Jones, or any other man on top of the earth, he was very much afraid of Phebe. He was not afraid she might prefer some one else, but he feared she did not want him.

“Why, Paul! How do you do? I am glad to see you. Mr. Edwards, Mr. Martin.”

Mr. Edwards extended his hand as he said: “I am glad to meet you. I have heard Phebe and Dr. Taggart both speak of you. I hope we shall be friends.”

"I hope so," replied Paul.

"You are going to enter the seminary this fall, I hear."

"Yes."

"I am glad of that. I am glad that you are going to enter the ranks of the ministry."

"Thank you."

"Consecrated young men are needed. I wish you were ready for work. I would be glad to have you go with me."

"Where?"

"To Ohio. I am going out there, among the wilds, to look after some stray sheep that are in danger of wandering from the fold, a sort of missionary work."

"Are you a preacher?"

"O yes. Do I not look it?" laughing. "I was licensed two years ago, and was ordained at the last meeting of our Presbytery, east of the mountains. It was thought I might be more useful as an ordained minister than simply a licentiate."

Paul heartily wished that he was making himself useful at that moment in his new field of labor. He ventured: "When are you going?"

"I do not know yet. I am going to stay two or three weeks with Dr. Taggart. I want to do a little studying with him. It may take me longer."

"I thought you were through."

"I am, through the seminary; but, my dear sir, you will find there is much to learn even after you are ordained."

That was said in a patronizing sort of a way that irritated Paul. "I expect to learn all my life, but I do not quite understand why you should study with Dr. Taggart after you are through the seminary."

"O, of course I am not obliged to study with any one, but there are some points I want to look up, and he wants me to preach for him next Sabbath; and so I have decided to stay this week and next any way, and then I will see."

Paul did not see any necessity for staying the next week after the preaching was over, but he held his peace. He stayed, and so did the Rev. Samuel Edwards, until it was getting late.

When he rose to depart he thought Edwards looked pleased.

Phebe said good night, and the preacher went out on the porch with him. "You have no idea how glad I am to have met you. May I go over in the morning to see you?"

"Certainly."

"I want you to do me a little favor."

"What is it?"

"I will tell you in the morning."

"All right. Good-by."

Paul did not sleep well that night, for thinking about Phebe and that man, and decided to ask his mother about it.

At the breakfast table Tom threw some light on the subject by saying: "I saw that old preacher going over to see Phebe again yesterday."

"Tom, you must not speak that way of a minister. It is not respectful," said his mother reprovingly.

"Well, mother, he is old; he will never see thirty."

"He does not look that old."

"Andy Fergus says he is twenty-seven," put in Annie, "and that is about the right age for Phebe. She is twenty-two herself."

"Did Andy say he is about the right age for Phebe?" laughed Tom.

"No, he did not; I say it."

"Who is he?" inquired Paul.

"He is a young preacher, some distant relation of Dr. Taggart, I think. He came here to see him a year or two ago, and they say he took a notion to Phebe. He has been here several times since, and spends most of his time over there. It will be a match sure," replied Tom. "I wish you were ready to marry them."

"I wish you would hush," said Paul.

"You needn't get mad. That will be a part of your ministerial business, a most interesting part, I should say. It will bring in the shekels."

Paul rose from the table and went out of the kitchen, where they were eating, and walked slowly toward the barn. Mr. Martin reproved Tom for his thoughtless speech, and instructed the children that Paul's call to the ministry was a very sacred matter and must not be made a subject for jokes.

Tom could not see any harm in what he had said, and, wondering at his brother's strange conduct, he followed him to the barn and found him lying on some new hay in the loft.

"What is the matter, Paul?"

"You are only a boy, Tom; I cannot tell you."

"I am twenty-one years old."

"Can I trust you?"

"Just as you please."

"O Tom, I hope you are not mad. I am so miserable. Life looks very dark to me now."

"I am sorry."

"I love Phebe, and it seems to me that I have always loved her. Is she really going to marry that fellow?"

"Paul Martin! I thought you wouldn't have her."

"Wouldn't have her?"

"Yes; people used to say she would not have George Jones because she liked you. I know she likes you better than she does Edwards. It stands to reason she must. If you wanted her, why did you not tell her so long ago?"

"My mind has been on my books. I have not been thinking of love or girls very much. I am not ready to marry, and Edwards is. He is coming over this morning to see me. He told me that he wanted me to do him a favor. I expect he wants me to speak a good word for him."

"Tell him you want her yourself."

"I could not do that."

“Why not?”

“It would not do any good, for if Phebe prefers him that ends the matter.”

“There he comes now.”

“I must go and meet him. Do not mention this, Tom;” and Paul hurried around to the front of the house to receive his unwelcome guest.

Tom mounted Charley, still his colt, and went to see Phebe. He meant business and felt perfectly competent to attend to it properly. He rode up to the gate and called out: “Halloo!”

Mrs. Fergus went to the door.

“Is Phebe at home?”

“Yes.”

“Tell her to come out here; I want to see her.”

Phebe went out. “Good morning, Tom. Can’t you come in?”

“No, I cannot. I am on private business. I came over to see if you are going to marry that preacher, Edwards. If it is settled, I have nothing more to say. Are you going to take him?”

“I do not understand you.”

“You do not want to tell. Well, you need not. I will tell you something. Paul is nearly crazy, because he thinks that Edwards has got ahead of him. Paul is not ready to marry yet, but he is worth waiting on. I thought I would come over and tell you, so you could take your choice, for I know if you would promise Edwards you would not go back on your word.

“I am much obliged to you, but I think you are mistaken about Paul.”

“No, I am not. He told me so himself. You must not mention it.”

“I will not.”

“Good-by.”

Phebe did not return to her domestic duties at once. She wanted to be alone, that she might think. She had promised Edwards that she would give him an answer during that visit, but she was not quite ready. She was conscious of the honor he conferred upon her when he asked her to become his wife, and, although her parents were not anxious to lose the only daughter of the household, they regarded marriage as the proper thing for all women, and they could not expect another such opportunity ever to come to their quiet little girl. They wanted her to accept the good fortune, and would be greatly disappointed if she did not. That was Saturday.

Young Edwards was to preach the next day, and on Monday he was to come for his answer, and she had about decided that she would tell him she did not feel any great surging love for him, but that she respected him, and if he thought it would add to his happiness she would do her best in the station to which he proposed to exalt her. To be a preacher's wife was the highest position ever attained by woman, in the estimation of the good people of that community.

Phebe did not put Martin and Edwards in the

balances and weigh them. She had unbounded confidence in Tom, and in the great joy that his message brought her she did not think of Edwards at all, but was content in the assurance that Paul loved her. That was enough. She had a happy home and was not anxious to marry any one. The answer was ready for the Rev. Samuel Edwards whenever he chose to call for it, and she went into the house with a lighter heart than she had carried for many a day.

"Phebe!"

"Well, mother?"

"Don't bother about the work. How are you and Edwards getting along?"

"We are good friends."

"Is that all?"

"Is not that enough?"

"No, he is going to preach to-morrow, and everybody will be asking about him. I hoped you would have it all settled."

"Now, mother, do you want to send me off to Ohio and let the wolves get me?"

"Phebe, have you made up your mind?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"How is it?"

"I do not want to marry Mr. Edwards."

"I am so sorry. I wish you could see your way clear."

"I do see my way clear."

"Do you never intend to marry?"

"Yes, when the right one comes along."

“What if he never comes?”

“Then I will fall back on George Jones.”

“You ought not to make light of so sacred a subject. I do not want to force your inclination, but I do not see why you cannot be happy with Mr. Edwards.”

“Mother, I do not want to marry now. You have only one girl. Can't I earn my living here awhile?”

“Have him wait.”

“I do not want to marry him, never.”

“Whom do you want to marry?”

“Nobody.”

Mr. Fergus came in.

“Father, don't let mother make me get married. Can't I live here a few years longer?”

“Yes, a thousand or two if you want to. My little girl does not have to get married, so she don't;” and he took her in his arms as if he thought there was danger of some would-be bridegroom whisking her out of the reach of his fatherly, protecting care. Her father hoped that she would accept Mr. Edwards; but if she did not, he would never let her know that he had wished it otherwise. When Tom Martin arrived at home he found his brother and his guest in the orchard in earnest conversation. Well satisfied with his morning's work, he went about his farm duties with alacrity, and when the stranger was well out of the way he joined Paul for the purpose of telling him the good turn he had done him.

“What did the fellow want?”

“About as I expected. He says Phebe has not given him a definite answer, but that she has promised it Monday, and he wanted me to see her in the meantime and plead his cause.”

“Are you going to?”

“No, a girl ought to decide such a question without outside help.”

“You had better go over this afternoon and see her for yourself.”

“No, no; that would never do. I have lived within half a mile of her all my life, and have never told her that I loved her. If I were to tell her now, when I know that she is considering the proposal of another, she would resent it as an impertinence.”

“Why?”

“For several reasons. If she wants Edwards, I have no disposition to come between them. He is ready to marry now, and I am not. I would rather she would answer him without knowing my feelings toward her. If she accepts him, it is all right. May God give me strength to bear it!”

Tom thought it was not necessary to tell him about his morning's visit.

Sabbath brought everybody to church. It was a churchgoing community, and that day was neither too hot nor too cold, and no one had an excuse to indulge his laziness by staying at home. Mr. Edwards preached the first sermon, and that gave the congregation a chance to discuss it dur-

ing the intermission. It was generally understood that he was a suitor for the hand of Phebe, and it was also generally supposed that he was her accepted lover, and would in the near future become her husband. They were proud of the affair. That an ordained minister should come over the mountains and take a wife from among their girls was an honor to every member of the church.

A group of ladies chatted as they ate their lunch. "When is it going to be?" inquired Mrs. Beck, glancing in the direction of Mrs. Fergus.

"It is not going to be at all, I am afraid."

"Not going to be?" exclaimed all at once.

"I am afraid not. Phebe does not take to him, and we cannot make her marry him."

"Does she not like him?"

"Yes, she likes him well enough, but she says that she does not want to marry."

"Do not let her throw such a chance over her shoulder. She will never get such another."

"We cannot compel her."

"You can advise her."

"Girls do not always take advice. I do not know what she will do, but I am afraid she will let him slip through her fingers."

"It will be too bad if she does."

No one thought there was much danger of such a catastrophe, or Phebe would have received some matronly advice that day, Sabbath that it was. The reverend gentleman called on Phebe Monday

morning, and found her on the front porch. She gave him her answer, gently but firmly, and sent him away with her respect, while she retained his. He knew that she would never be his wife, and that it was through no fault of his. He accepted his fate and bade her good-by without any display of feeling.

The theological points he wanted to study with Dr. Taggart suddenly lost their interest, and on Tuesday morning he turned his face in the direction of the wilderness of Ohio, and Pigeon Creek congregation knew him no more forever.

Paul kept away from Phebe for several days, and when he did go his mind was made up. He wanted to know his fate. He too found her on the front porch. After greetings were exchanged there was an awkward silence. Both tried to say something, but the attempts were little better than absolute failures.

“Phebe.”

“Well.”

“Phebe.”

“Well.”

Paul went up to her. “Phebe, will you—Phebe, will you marry me?”

“Why, Paul!”

“I know it is egotistical in me asking you, when I know that you refused Edwards, for he is away ahead of me; but, Phebe, I love you, and I am in no hurry, for I have got to go to the seminary yet, and you will have plenty of

time. You will try to love me; won't you, dear?"

Phebe evaded the question. "How do you know that I refused Edwards?" she asked gently.

"He told me so."

"Did he run around telling it?"

"No, he only told me; he is a splendid man, but, Phebe, you did not answer me. Will you be my wife?"

"Not to-day."

"Some time?"

"Perhaps so."

Paul was satisfied; heart answered to heart. They loved each other, and words were not needed. They forgot time, and minutes ran into hours, when they were called back to things material by Phebe's father coming around the corner of the house.

Paul went to meet him, and as they shook hands he said: "Mr. Fergus, I want to ask a favor.

"What is it?"

"I want Phebe."

"Why—why, Paul Martin! Who would have thought it?"

"I think it, and I will do my best to make her happy?"

"Will she have you?"

"I think so."

"It is for her to say."

The men shook hands again, and as David Fergus retreated the way he had come the strong

man brushed the unbidden tears from his cheeks. Her prince had come, and his little girl wanted to marry.

Paul went home. "Mother, I have proposed to Phebe. We are engaged."

"Why, Paul!"

"Are you satisfied?"

"Yes, yes; we all like Phebe, but you cannot marry until you are through the seminary."

"I do not know about that yet."

Paul was very much in love and very much in earnest. He tried to persuade Phebe to be married before he went away, but she was firm. He could not bear the thought of possible rivals while he would be gone.

On the day of his departure for the school of the prophets he told George Jones the condition of affairs.

A few hours later Sallie Beck ran into her mother's room. "O mother, what do you think? Paul Martin and Phebe Fergus are engaged."

CHAPTER X.

THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

MARTIN started to the seminary well pleased with himself and all the world. He had wanted to marry Phebe and take her with him, or leave her his wife at her home. She decided the question for him. She considered it the wiser plan to wait until he was licensed to preach, and, although he did not quite agree with her, he had told her when he proposed to her that he was in no hurry. He found that she had a will of her own, and she was in no hurry either. He asked his father to look after her; he requested his mother to see to her; he told Tom to take care of her, and left feeling that she would probably get along in comfort until his return. He stipulated that he should be sent for if he was needed, and he wrote to her and received letters from her regularly. He was too sensible to let thoughts of her interfere with his studies. The distinguished minister who had charge of the school of theology received him kindly. He presented recommendations from Dr. Brown and Dr. Taggart, both of whom regarded him as a talented young man, who would reflect credit upon the Church with which he was connected. He was placed in a private family to

board. He was told that he would find it much more congenial than a public boarding house. The head of the house was a prominent merchant in the city and a ruling elder in the Presbyterian Church. Mrs. Black was a good motherly woman, who was glad to have the upright, unassuming country divinity student in the house. She hoped his influence over their son Sam would be salutary. They had an only daughter, Alice, who was in her senior year at school. The outlook was bright, and Martin appreciated his cultured surroundings.

Sam had certain duties in his father's store that he was supposed to perform, but he contrived to have a great deal of leisure time. He spent some of it in places that would have horrified his good mother if she had known it. He met Martin at the breakfast table. When the meal was ended he lingered in the dining room.

"Mother, who is that fellow?"

"He is a young theological student."

"Where is he from?"

"He is from the country, some place in Washington County, I think."

"What is he doing here?"

"He is attending the seminary."

"We do not keep the seminary. I mean at our house."

"O, Dr. Smith asked your father to take him to board. He has just graduated at college. His means are limited, and he is hardly able to pay the

prices they ask at places where they make their living by keeping boarders."

"Then he is going to board here?"

"Yes."

"What do we want with a boarder? He will be a nuisance."

"No, he will not; he needed a home, and we have plenty of room. I hope you will treat him politely. He has been raised in the country, and lacks the ease and grace that comes natural to young men who have been brought up in the city."

"I'll treat him all right. I'll take him around and show him the sights. I wonder if he can dance."

"Why, Sam, he is going to be a preacher!"

"What if he is? Didn't David dance when he took up the ark of the Lord? and didn't the women dance when they went out to meet the soldiers after the battle, with their trimbles and cymbals and fiddles?"

"That was different. Dancing, such as they have now, is wrong. I hope that you will never indulge in any such questionable amusement."

"No, mother; I just watch the rest;" and Sam left the room.

Alice was in the hall with her books in her hands ready for school.

"Sam, how do you like Mr. Martin?"

"You mean the boarder; I suppose he is all right, but what do we want of him? I am sur-

prised that mother will consent to be troubled with a boarder."

"She took him as she does everything else, from a sense of duty. I am glad she did. I like him. I am going to set my cap for him."

"I am going to introduce him to society. Between us we will make it lively for him. We will keep him from getting homesick."

"Do you suppose he is engaged?"

"No, he never looked at a girl in his life."

"I will make him look at me before he is much older."

Alice went to school with her thoughts on the fun she meant to have with the new member of their family, rather than on her lessons. Sam went to the store thinking that he would please his mother by being civil to the young man, and he would make it as pleasant for him as he could, if his tastes ran in the right direction. Martin went to his classes and gave his time and thoughts to his work. Sam was good-natured, and, having plenty of time, he patronized Martin to a certain extent, and was of use to him. He took him to the public library, and introduced him to some desirable people. One evening he went to his room.

"Martin, would you like to go out to-night?"

"Where?"

"Over on Church Street, a little entertainment, a sort of an exhibition; I am sure you would like it."

"Is it free, or is there an admittance fee?"

“It will not cost you anything. I have a couple of tickets. You had better go. You can study better after a little recreation.”

“Thank you. You are very kind. I believe I will. I have not got much money to spend on pleasure, and not much time to spare to enjoy it if I had.”

When they reached the place Black and Martin were given seats by the obliging usher in the dress circle of the most fashionable theater in the city.

“What sort of a place is this?”

“It is the Amusement Hall, built for the purpose of exhibitions of this kind.”

“Do they have them often?”

“O yes, nearly every night.”

The curtain went up, and Martin was fascinated by the scene before him. He enjoyed the play, much to the amusement of Black, who meant him no harm, and only wanted a little fun. Some time after Black called again at Martin's room and invited him to another little entertainment.

“Is it the same place that we went before?”

“No, this is different; this is all music, a kind of a concert.”

“I would like to go, but I hate to go at your expense; it is not quite right.”

“O yes, that is all right, I get my money from father, you pay him your board, and that includes these little entertainments.”

“I am much obliged for your kindness. I am very fond of music, and will be glad to go.”

They went to the Grand Opera House, and Martin enjoyed the music to his heart's content. A few evenings after, as he passed through the hall, Alice, who was standing in the parlor door, stopped him.

"Mr. Martin, why do you never go out any?"

"I do."

"I never see you only at church. Where do you go?"

"I have been to several lectures and to an exhibition and to a concert."

"I do not mean to such places as that; I mean to parties and socials."

"I am not invited; I am a stranger, and cannot expect to be."

"That is the way to get acquainted. I have an invitation for you to a little social Thursday evening at Mr. White's. Will you go?"

"I do not know them. Where do they live?"

"Around on Fifth Street. I know them. If you will go with me, I will introduce you."

"Certainly. I shall be happy to go."

Martin went to the little social, which was in the home of a prominent member of the Church. He was a little startled when he saw the hostess was serving wine. He did not have pronounced views on the subject of temperance, but he felt out of place. He took a glass and sipped a little, while he talked with a young lady whom he had just met.

"Do you enjoy these parties, Mr. Martin?" she inquired.

“I am enjoying this,” he replied. “but I do not go out much.”

“I am so glad you are here. So many of the young men at the seminary act as if they considered it wrong to go to any place except to church and to prayer meeting.”

“I do not feel that way.”

Alice thought it her duty to introduce him to all her girl friends. Other invitations followed, and he soon went out more than was for his good.

Sam introduced him to some young men, and privately told them the story of the theater and opera. They regarded it as a good joke, and repeated it. By mutual consent the theater was called by them Amusement Hall, and the opera house Concert Hall. He wrote to Phebe about the exhibitions and concerts that he attended. One morning at the breakfast table he spoke to Mr. Black about the propriety of serving wine at evening entertainments.

“There is nothing in that,” said his host. “Everybody does it. Everybody drinks wine. You remember the account in the Bible of Jesus making wine out of water at the wedding. They evidently had wine at weddings in Bible times, and the Savior performed a miracle to furnish them with it on that occasion.”

“It may be all right,” replied Martin, “but it seems to me that it leads to dissipation.”

“It does,” said Sam with emphasis. “Nearly all the boys that I know who drink formed

the taste at parties and weddings and receptions."

"I hope you do not know any that drink to excess," said his mother.

"I know one or two," he replied.

That evening he inquired: "Martin, can you play?"

"Play what?"

"Cards."

"No."

"Would you like to learn?"

"No, I regard it as wrong."

"Regard what as wrong?"

"Gambling."

"Who said anything about gambling?"

"I beg your pardon. I have always thought that card playing and gambling are the same."

"I can tell you they are not. I play cards, but I do not gamble."

"I know nothing about it. I have never seen either."

"You are as well off as if you had. I was going to invite you to the club; but as you neither drink nor play, you would not enjoy it. Here is a ticket to Amusement Hall. I cannot use it tonight; you might as well go if you can."

"Thank you. I believe I can."

For the first time he went alone, and was seated near a young lady whom he had met at a social.

"Why, Mr. Martin! You here? I am glad to see you. Do you come often?"

“Occasionally.”

A few days later one of the professors told Martin that Dr. Smith, the president of the seminary, desired a private interview with him.

Martin went to the audience chamber without the slightest misgiving. Holding his hat in his hand, he said: “Professor Allison told me that you wanted to see me.”

“I do. Be seated. It is a matter of the gravest concern.”

“Is there anything wrong?”

“I am afraid there is.”

“What is it?”

“I am surprised that you should ask. I think you must know.”

“I do not.”

“Then it becomes my painful duty to tell you. The faculty has reliable information that you are not leading just the right kind of a life.

“In what respect?”

“Socially. You frequent disreputable places, where any Christian ought to be ashamed to be seen, to say nothing of a young man who is preparing to preach the everlasting gospel.”

“I go with Miss Alice. I did not know there was any harm in it.”

“It is wrong, all wrong; more than that, it is contrary to the rules of the institution. I would not have believed that Mr. Black would have permitted his daughter to go to such places. I am more astonished than ever.”

"I have never seen anything wrong, unless it is the wine. I do not altogether approve of that; but Mr. Black says everybody uses it, and that it is all right if not used to excess."

"Young preachers had better let wine alone. You do not drink, I hope?"

"No, sir; not habitually. I take a little wine when it is offered at parties."

"I am not talking about parties."

"What are you talking about?"

"I am talking about theaters and operas, the path that leads down to destruction. It is bad for anybody, unpardonable for a preacher."

"I was never at a theater or an opera in my life."

"You were not?"

"No, sir."

There was a long and painful silence. Finally Dr. Smith said: "You can go, Mr. Martin."

The faculty investigated more closely the rumors that had reached them, and were convinced of their truth.

Miss Wilson was seen, and she reluctantly admitted that she had seen Martin at the theater, that he sat near her, and they talked between the acts. She did not want her name mentioned in the affair. She went to such places herself once in a while; she did not consider it wrong, and she certainly did not want to injure the young theological student, to whom she was almost a stranger. After consultation Dr. Smith wrote to Dr. Tag-

gart. He told him in concise terms that Martin was leading a life calculated to bring reproach upon the Church. That he was very marked in his attentions to the daughter of Mr. Black, accompanying her to parties and balls, and that he attended the theater and opera with her brother and his fast friends and sometimes alone, and, worst of all, when accused of it he had denied it. He added: "We feel obliged to send him home, but will suspend judgment until we hear from you."

Dr. Taggart received the letter on Saturday. Had a bombshell bursted in his room, he would not have been more surprised or more disturbed. He preached his usual two sermons on the Sabbath, and on Monday he harnessed his faithful horse to his buggy and started for Allegheny. He went first to see Dr. Smith.

"I came to see you about your letter. There is surely something wrong."

"I am sorry to say there is."

"Paul Martin does not attend playhouses."

"We have indisputable evidence that he does."

"If he does, he has been led off, but he will not deny it. He is truthful."

"He told me that he never was at a theater or an opera in his life."

"Then he was not."

"He certainly has been."

"The leopard may change its spots, but Paul Martin will not lie."

"He had been both to the theater and the opera when he told me he had not," replied Dr. Smith, somewhat nettled.

"There is some mistake. I will sift it to the bottom."

"I sincerely hope you will."

"How does he get along at his books?"

"He is doing very well in his studies. I am afraid he is lacking in piety. It is a pity he did not take to law or medicine; then it would not have been so bad."

"If ever a man was called of God to preach, that man is Paul Martin. You just wait."

"We are waiting."

Dr. Taggart got the proper address and went to see Martin. He was not at home.

"I am Dr. Taggart. I am his pastor at Pigeon Creek. Can I go to his room and wait until he comes?"

"Yes, you can wait. Come into the parlor. We shall have supper in a few minutes."

Martin did not come, and Dr. Taggart took supper with the family. Determined to get at the facts in regard to Paul, he asked some leading questions.

"Does Martin go out much?"

"Very little," replied Mrs. Black. "He goes to lectures, and very rarely to a social."

"He is not much of a ladies' man," said Alice.

"He has no right to be. He is engaged to marry a most excellent young woman at home."

“Engaged? That is the reason I have had such uphill work.”

“Alice! Alice!” said her mother, reprovingly, “Dr. Taggart does not understand you.”

“Yes he does;” and, turning to the doctor, she explained, “I do not want to marry him; I only want to help him have a good time.”

“I am afraid you have succeeded too well, for his good,” replied the Doctor severely. “They are talking at the seminary about sending him home.”

“What for?”

“They say he attends theaters and operas. If he does, I should not blame them. They are not fit places for any Christian, much less a preacher. I have not seen Paul, but Dr. Smith says he denies it. I am here to straighten it out, and I am going to do it.”

“Did you come all the way from Pigeon Creek for that?” inquired Sam.

“Yes. It is no trifling errand. A soul is in danger. I am his pastor, and must give an account of my stewardship.”

Sam excused himself and went directly to the residence of Dr. Smith. They had met before, and introductions were not necessary.

“I came to see you about Martin. His preacher is at our house, and says he is likely to be expelled. Martin is all right. He has not done anything out of the way.”

“Do you know anything about the charges against him?”

“Yes, I expect I know more than you do.”

“Are you willing to testify?”

“That is what I am here for.”

“Then I am glad to see you. We want somebody that is not afraid to tell what they know.”

“I am not afraid of anything. What is it that you are trying to find out?”

“About Martin's habits. He is accused of attending theaters and such places. That is bad enough. He denies it; and, if the charges are true, that is worse.”

“I know all about it. He has gone a few times to the theater, and a time or two to the opera, but he does not know it. I am the cause of the trouble. I am to blame, and I am willing to bear it.”

Sam gave a full explanation, and assured the learned president that Martin never dreamed of Amusement Hall being the theater, or Concert Hall being an opera house.

Dr. Smith scarcely comprehended. “Do you not know that such places lead down to hell?” he asked.

“No, I do not. I consider it a very pleasant way to spend an evening.”

“You? the son of a ruling elder? I have no patience with you.”

“I do not belong to the Church, and I did not come here to be lectured. I came to explain about Martin. I got him into it, and I thought it my

duty to get him out of it. I will not detain you any longer."

"Wait a moment. I do not want to hurt your feelings. Will you tell Martin what you have told me?"

"Yes, if you want me to."

"I do."

"Are you going to expel him?"

"I cannot say yet. Try and see him to-night, and tell him at once."

"All right."

Sam was anxious to get through with the unpleasant duty, so he returned home and knocked on Martin's door.

"Martin, will you come to my room a minute? I have something to tell you."

"I cannot leave Dr. Taggart."

"I want to tell you while he is here."

"Go on. I will excuse you."

When they were alone Sam began: "I had no idea I was getting you into any trouble. I only wanted to make it pleasant for you. I may as well tell you at once, and be done with it. Amusement Hall is the theater, and Concert Hall is the opera house."

Martin gasped for breath, and sunk into the nearest chair.

"The plays at that house are all moral and high-toned," continued Sam, "and it will not hurt anybody to see them. It would do Dr. Smith and Dr. Taggart both good. They need something to take the bigotry out of them."

“I am sorry,” replied Martin. “I know you meant it kindly.”

“I know you have not been hurt, and I hope you will forgive me for the trouble I have caused you.”

“Yes. It is easy to forgive a kindness, even if it was a mistaken kindness. I enjoyed the—the—the performances very much, but I would not have gone if I had known.”

“You mean the plays. I thought you needed some recreation, when you spent so much time on the Bible and Catechism and Confession of Faith. I could not stand it.”

“You are probably not a Christian. I derive my greatest pleasure from my studies.”

“I am glad you do, and I will not be in your way again. We are still friends?”

“Certainly.”

Martin went back to Dr. Taggart, and that worthy gentleman soon had the satisfaction of knowing that his tiresome journey had not been in vain. He had sifted the mystery to the bottom, as he had promised to do, and had possession of the facts. He stayed that night with Martin, and, while he reproved him, he did not condemn him. Martin went early in the morning and made a manly explanation to Dr. Smith. It could hardly be called a confession, except that he confessed that he had been at both the theater and the opera house. He wanted it distinctly understood that he was not aware of it, and he voluntarily prom-

ised that he would not repeat the offense. The faculty forgave him and restored him to favor.

Dr. Taggart went home and told Martin's father that he had been suddenly called to Allegheny on business, and had stayed overnight with Paul, who was well and doing well in his studies.

Martin was never seen at a play again. In due course of time he finished the work and was licensed to preach the everlasting gospel. He returned to his country home, carrying with him the respect and the best wishes of the faculty, as well as of the students of the seminary.

CHAPTER XI.

THE ORDINATION.

IT was not the custom to ordain a preacher until he received a call to a pastorate. Paul preached, by special invitation, in a considerable number of pulpits. Dr. Taggart not only invited him, but urged him to preach for him. He begged to be excused, and the doctor yielded, knowing that he would be more apt to become embarrassed there than any place else. The Rev. Samuel Edwards had been called to another field of labor, and the mission in Ohio was vacant. Chartiers Presbytery had been requested to supply the vacancy, and Martin was suggested for the work. It was not thought best to send a young, inexperienced licentiate to so important a place; but after he had preached acceptably in many churches, and the people as well as the preachers were pleased with him, he was offered the appointment. After careful and prayerful consideration, and a consultation with Phebe Fergus, in which she consented to accompany him, he accepted the important charge.

Formal notice was given in all the pulpits that the Presbytery would meet in Pigeon Creek church for the purpose of ordaining Paul Martin to the holy office of the ministry. As an ordained minister he could administer the sacraments of

baptism and the Lord's Supper. He was going into what was considered almost a wilderness, among irreligious people. It was important that he be competent to baptize his converts and the children of the members of the Church, most of whom had emigrated from Western Pennsylvania. The ministers and elders and many of the common people went to that meeting of the Presbytery from all over the country. Dr. Brown, of Canonsburg, was there, his countenance beaming with joy that one of his boys was to be set apart to that high calling.

Paul preached the sermon. It was called his "trial" sermon, and it was a trial. It was a compliment to the members of Pigeon Creek congregation that the Presbytery met there, but any place else would have suited Paul better. The text assigned him was: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." The people did believe in God and his Son, and they also believed in Paul Martin. They had known him from his infancy, and none of them doubted his call to his work, or his ability to do it well. Some of them were troubled because he was going out from among them, and that Phebe was going with him; but they did not doubt his success, or that he would carve out for himself a name and fame, until all the pulpits in the community to which he was going would be wanting him to proclaim from them the good news of salvation.

Although he preached to his father and mother and Tom, and Phebe and her parents and Dr. Brown, and all the rest, he did it as if helped by the Holy Spirit. He was actuated by no desire to show off his attainments. He was embarrassed in the presence of his audience, but he recognized the propriety of meeting there, that all his old neighbors and friends might have an opportunity to hear him preach and might witness his ordination. He owed them that pleasure, and he only hoped that none of them would be ashamed of him. His hopes were more than realized. A great many kind remarks were made about his carefully prepared sermon, and the only criticism that it called forth was, "A leetle too short," which was said in such a pleasant manner that it did not amount to a criticism.

A basket dinner was served during the intermission. Paul's talents and gifts were freely discussed in a friendly spirit. He was twenty-six years old, and had spent nine years in preparation for his work, six in college and three in the seminary. It was the unanimous verdict, not only of the Presbytery but of the people, that he had paid the price and deserved his success.

His ordination that afternoon and his wedding that was to take place the next week were the all-absorbing topics of conversation. It was Tuesday, and they talked without the usual restraints of the Sabbath. A group of women surrounded

Mrs. Fergus. "Everybody is invited. What will you do with all the people?"

"Yes, we did not want to slight any one. They will all find room somewhere. If it does not rain, a good many can stay in the yard."

"Are you going to have a cooked dinner?"

"O yes, and that reminds me that I wanted to see some of you about helping us. We will need help Wednesday, for most of the work will have to be done then; there will not be much time Thursday before ten o'clock."

"I will go Wednesday."

"So will I."

"You can count on me."

"O Mrs. Fergus, let us girls come early on Thursday morning and set the table. Can't we?"

"Yes, I was going to ask some of you."

"Are you going to set it in the orchard?"

"If it does not rain; if it does, we will set it in the barn."

"It won't rain."

"Say, where is she going to stand?"

"They are going to stand on the porch, where everybody can see them."

"Goody! goody!" and they rushed off to tell the news of the wonderful wedding to their less fortunate sisters who were not invited as yet to help in any part of the approaching festivities.

The loan of dishes, knives, and spoons, pots, pans, and kettles was freely offered and as freely accepted. The fine tablecloth in several house-

holds was to be done up for the interesting occasion, for, as it was to be a congregational wedding, they did not say, "Send over and get what you need," but, "Just tell me, and I will take you anything I have got that you need."

The young men were quietly circling around on a secret mission. They wanted to express their appreciation by a substantial token of respect, and, after much thought, they decided to buy a genuine gold watch, and have "Paul and Phebe" inscribed on the inside of the case. Watches were not common in those days, and it was a big undertaking, but they were equal to it. A subscription paper was presented to all the men, and the utmost secrecy was enjoined. Not a Martin nor a Fergus was permitted to know a breath about it. The money was given to Dr. Brown, and he was to get the watch and take it to the wedding and make the presentation speech. The last penny was paid in, when the ringing of the bell called the people together to witness the ordination.

The sermon had been preached in the woods, and these services were held in the same place. Amid a profound hush, Paul knelt for the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery. Dr. Taggart led in the consecration prayer. He was an old man, with silvery locks, and his feeble voice trembled as he prayed for the blessings of heaven to rest upon the young man whom he had baptized a quarter of a century before.

Martin was consecrated to the service of the Lord but a few feet from the spot where he had received his first communion. It was a place of hallowed associations. He rose with a consciousness of a peace which the world can neither give nor take away. He was "charged" by a ministerial brother appointed to perform that duty. He was publicly urged to be faithful and diligent and patient in the performance of his pastoral work. His parish was to be a new and an untried one, and he was urged to take unto himself the whole armor of God, that he might be able to stand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. He was charged to have his feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, and above all to take the shield of faith, wherewith he would be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. He was charged to take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. He was reminded that he would not find his pathway, at all times and in all places, strewn with roses, but that he would be called upon to encounter thorns and thistles. At the conclusion of the charge the vast throng of people united in singing:

"Goodness and mercy all my life
Shall surely follow me;
And in God's house for evermore
My dwelling place shall be."

The benediction was pronounced, and nearly every stranger who had not met Martin sought

an introduction. They congratulated him upon the sermon he had preached, and also upon the new field of labor he was about to enter. The day was nearly gone, and the people wended their way homeward with thankful hearts. Paul promised to assist the Rev. Mr. Kerr with his communion services the next Sabbath. He was glad of the invitation, since it would relieve him of the danger of having again to preach to his home folks. That it was twelve miles distant was a matter of no consideration, for his time and Tom's Charley were always at his disposal. He visited Phebe the day after his ordination, and on Thursday he made the trip, that he might be rested and ready for his pulpit work on Friday. He would have so few opportunities to preach before leaving that he was nervously anxious to do his best, that he might leave a good impression behind him when he went to sow the seed given him in the new soil beyond the Ohio.

CHAPTER XII.

A BEREAVEMENT.

ON the Thursday morning following the ordination Phebe Fergus did not go to the kitchen as usual, and her mother went to her room and peeped in. She was sleeping, and Mrs. Fergus did not disturb her. An hour later she went back, and found her tossing as if in pain.

“Are you sick, Phebe?”

“Yes, ma’am. I am afraid I am.”

“What is the matter?”

“I do not know; my head aches terribly. Is it time to get up?”

“You have a fever.”

“Yes, ma’am. Help me up.”

“Do not get up, dear.”

“I must; I want to go to the sitting room. I cannot get my breath here. It is so hot.”

“Father, come and see Phebe.”

“Take me up, father; take me up!” she cried, as he entered the room.

“What is the matter, my dear?”

“Take me up. I cannot breathe.”

The mother got cool, fresh water, and while she bathed the burning brow the father was getting Andy off for the family physician.

“Do not lose a minute. Tell him she has a high fever, and to be here as soon as he can.”

He went back to the bedside of his only daughter, his one ewe lamb.

“Take me up,” she moaned.

“Do you want to sit on my lap?”

“No, I cannot breathe. Take me up.”

Such simple remedies as were at hand and could do no harm were administered. A bed was put up in the sitting room, and she was tenderly carried to it. Isaac rode over for Mrs. Martin, and they waited anxiously for the doctor. He was not at home, but Andy followed him, and he reached them about noon.

“Why, Phebe, what is the matter?”

“I cannot get my breath; let me up.”

“Lie still, dear.”

“I won't do it. I am not going to lie still. Come on, come on, come on!” she shouted. Dr. Clark looked grave while he felt her pulse, and asked a few questions of the distressed parents. He administered a sedative, and prepared some medicine. He stayed a long time, and left saying he would be back in the morning. The father followed him to the gate.

“What is the matter with her, Doctor?”

“She has a fever.”

“Bad?”

“Yes.”

“Is there any danger?”

Dr. Clark hesitated. He was a good doctor

and a conscientious Christian man. He could not tell his lifelong friend what he thought, so he said: "Give her her medicine, and we can tell better in the morning."

Phebe raved all that night. The doctor came early. Tom Martin and Andy Fergus were sitting on the porch. It required the constant attention of the attendants to keep the patient in bed. The physician looked helplessly on. He went out to the porch.

"Where is Paul?"

"He has gone to Chartier, to assist at the communion."

"When will he be back?"

"Monday."

"Andy, I want you to go to Washington and bring Dr. Gray. I will write him a note while you are getting your horse."

"Is she dangerous?"

"Yes."

Andy bounded down the steps.

"Tom, go for Paul, and prepare him for the worst."

Tom caught him by the arm. "Doctor, couldn't she possibly get well?"

"I am afraid that she will not."

"O Dr. Clark," exclaimed Mr. Fergus, who had followed the doctor to the porch. A deathly pallor overspread his face as he comprehended the decision. The information had not been intended for him, but the doctor realized that perhaps it was

best, for he would be obliged to know and that soon. He turned to the stricken father.

“We will do all that can be done. Get me some paper. I want to write a note. I am going to send Andy to Washington for Dr. Gray.”

“Yes, yes. Come to the kitchen;” and he led the way. Dr. Gray was a specialist, and might accomplish wonders. Hope revived, but his heart bled anew as he heard his daughter's wail: “Take me up! let me go!”

The two young men started on their errands at the same time.

Tom was dazed. “Doctor, what shall I tell him?”

“Tell him that Phebe is sick, and he must come home.”

“Shall I stop him in the middle of his sermon?”

“No, I should not do that. There is no such hurry. You had better not let him know that you are there until the sermon is over. She will not be any worse.”

“See here, doctor! do you think that Dr. Gray can do anything for her?”

“No.”

“Why are you sending for him, then?”

“We will all feel better when it is over. We give her water when she is thirsty, but we do not expect it to cure her.”

Andy was dumb with grief, and wondered how Tom could talk so much, but he remembered that it was not his sister whose life the fever was so sure-

ly burning away. Tom wondered how Andy could be so calm, but he remembered that he had always had her and did not realize what it would be to lose her.

When Tom reached the church the people were singing, and he sat down on the steps to listen. When they were through Paul rose in the pulpit and said: "I call your attention to the first verse of the twenty-seventh chapter of Proverbs." He then read in a clear voice: "Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth?"

Tom heard every word of the sermon distinctly through the open door, and when it was finished he walked away a short distance, that he might gain strength for the work before him. He waited until the intermission, which was but a few minutes and then sought his brother.

"Why, Tom! are you here?"

"Yes, I heard you preach."

"You did not come for the purpose of hearing me?"

"No."

They walked out of hearing of any one.

"Have you had your lunch?"

"Yes."

"Well, Paul, I hate to tell you, but Phebe is sick, and I have come for you."

"O, is that it?"

"Yes."

"Well, that is nothing; I will go as soon as I

“speak to Mr. Kerr. I am sorry she is sick, but I do not mind going home.”

Tom wanted him to understand how serious it was, but he thought he could tell him on the way. He had told Mr. Kerr, and when that gentleman shook Paul by the hand at parting, and said fervently, “May God give you grace for every trial before you,” Paul thought of his coming life in the West, and responded: “Thank you, sir.”

The brothers returned together, and went directly to the home of Phebe. Tom tried to obey the injunction of the doctor, and prepare Paul for the worst, but he would not be prepared. It seemed to Tom that he was stupid, but he must let him know, even if he had to tell him what Dr. Clark had said.

“Paul.”

“Well?”

“Phebe is pretty bad.”

“Yes, I suppose so, or you would not have come for me. It is very kind of you. I am much obliged to you. You are the best brother any man ever had. Phebe thinks you are about the best living man next to me.”

They rode on for several miles and talked but little.

“Paul.”

“Well?”

“Phebe has a fever.”

“Is it a fever? I have not heard of any fever around, have you?”

“No, none but hers.”

Another long silence.

“Paul.”

“Well?”

“Dr. Clark told me to tell you that Phebe is pretty bad.”

“Have they had a doctor?”

“Yes.”

“She must be bad.”

Then was Tom's opportunity, but his heart failed him. Another long silence, longer than before. It was Paul who spoke. “Tom, do you suppose that Phebe will be well by Thursday, or do you think she will have a long spell of sickness?”

“I do not know.”

They rode on.

“Tom.”

“Well?”

“Is Phebe in bed?”

“Yes.”

“Let us ride a little faster.”

It was coming to Paul. He began to realize that Phebe was sick. They rode up to the gate, and Isaac took charge of their horses.

“Has Dr. Gray come?”

“Yes.”

“Dr. Gray? Did you send for Dr. Gray? Is Dr. Clark not at home?”

Isaac burst into tears as he replied: “They are both in the house.”

Paul rushed in, and was met by Dr. Clark.

"Be careful, she will not likely know you."

"Not know me? Is she out of her head?"

"Yes, she is delirious. Did Tom not tell you?"

"No, he did not tell me anything."

He fell on his knees at the side of the bed, and it seemed as if his heart would break as he moaned: "Phebe, O Phebe."

"Take me up! let me go!"

"Phebe, darling!"

"What are you doing? Let me go!"

Paul was stunned. He turned to the doctor.

"Why don't you do something?"

"We are doing all that can be done."

"Is it the medicine that is affecting her?"

"No, it is the disease."

"What is the matter?"

"Fever."

"How long will it last?"

"We cannot tell."

All that night they watched and waited. Saturday morning brought Dr. Clark, accompanied by Dr. Gray, who had stayed overnight with him. Paul besieged them. "Can you do nothing at all?"

"Nothing at all."

"What is the use of having a doctor if you can't do anything?"

Dr. Clark would not have forgiven so rude a speech at any other time. His heart ached for the young man as well as for the parents, who

were bowing beneath the rod, realizing that it was held in a loving Father's hand. No one said anything to Paul about resignation, for he was a minister, and knew all about those things.

The fever raged with but little cessation throughout Saturday, Sabbath, and Monday. Tuesday the fire seemed to go out for want of fuel. She slept a little and took no notice of any one. In the evening she looked around as if wondering what it all meant.

Paul bent over her. "You are sick, darling."

"Yes."

"Do you feel any better?"

"Yes, I am going now. Is it late?"

"Phebe, don't you know me?"

She looked at him as if to gather her scattered thoughts. "Why, yes; you are Paul." Then she closed her eyes and again slept.

The doctor left his orders. "I would not give her any more medicine. Make her as comfortable as you can. There will probably be a change about the middle of the night."

He went away. There was nothing more that he could do. On the road he met Dr. Taggart. "She cannot last until morning, and I wish you could stay with them and look after Paul. I do not like the way he acts."

The Doctor could stay, and sent word to his family. Everybody was very kind to the afflicted parents. Neighbors came and went. A few waited on the porch.

"Mother!"

"What, darling."

"I am sick."

"Yes, dear."

"Father!"

"Phebe!" He took her hand.

"Good-by, father."

"Where are you going?"

"Do you not know? I am going to heaven, and I am not a bit afraid, and I always thought I would be"—

She panted for breath, and they stepped back to give her more air. It was nearly midnight. Paul laid his hand on her forehead. It was icy cold. Her breath came in gasps.

"Phebe!"

"Good-by, Paul; let me go now."

She gasped again, once more, her eyes closed, her lips quivered. All was over.

Tears flowed freely, hearts were bowed down in grief, but there was no loud lamentation. Phebe was gone. They would go to her, but she would not return to them.

Paul did not seem to comprehend. "Is she worse?"

Dr. Taggart took him by the arm. "She is dead. Come out into the yard, and you will feel better."

"I will never feel better. Did you say she is dead?"

"Yes, and we must submit to a God of justice."

“Queer justice that.”

“You must not talk so.”

“I cannot help it. I wish I could swear. I think it would be a relief.

They had reached the back yard.

“If you met the God of the universe face to face, would you dare question his justice?”

“Yes, I would.”

“Paul Martin! You are an ordained minister.”

“Get out of my way!” he replied, as he pushed the feeble old man roughly to one side and started on.

“Where are you going?”

“I am going to die.”

“Tom! Tom Martin!”

Tom ran out.

“Follow Paul. He is crazy. Do not let him make way with himself.”

Paul went into the orchard, closely followed by his faithful brother. He stopped under an apple tree and lay down on the ground. Tom sat down to watch and wait. After a silence which seemed as if it would last forever, he groaned: “O God if there is a God, help me to bear it.”

Still Tom waited and watched.

Paul lay gazing up at the stars. He spoke not a word; he shed not a tear.

Again he moaned: “O God, if there is a God, help me to bear it.”

Tom dared not interrupt him. He felt that it was best for him to be alone.

Paul sat up. "O God, help me to bear it!" He clasped his hands and bowed his head; he sprang to his feet: "O God! My God! help me to bear it!" His whole frame shook in agony. Tears flowed like rain. Tom could stand it no longer. He went up to him.

"Paul."

"Why, Tom! are you here?"

"Yes, I came for you. Let us go to the house."

"Perhaps we had better. It is getting chilly."

Tom took hold of his arm. His teeth chattered. Evidently he was having a chill. They reached the back yard, and Paul sat down on a stump. "I cannot walk another step."

"I will help you."

He made another effort, reeled, and fell. Tom caught him and laid him tenderly on the grass, then ran around the house to the front porch.

"Father, Paul is sick. Hadn't we better try to get him home?"

"Yes. Where is he?"

Tom led the way. Willing hands soon had the horses harnessed to the farm wagon. A bed was placed in it, and Paul was laid thereon. His brother-in-law, Fred Berry, did the driving, while Tom sat by him, and tried to soothe him. His father went on before to prepare the way. A bed was hastily put up in the Martin sitting room, and Paul was carried in and laid on it, crying out in agony: "Take me up! let me go!"

He was sick or insane, or both. Dr. Clark was

sent for, and reached him about ten o'clock. He did not seem as much surprised as they had expected him to be.

“What is the matter with him, doctor?”

“Fever.”

“Is it the same as Phebe? Is it contagious?”

“No, not exactly. Paul has not taken any food and has lost too much sleep. His nerves are all unstrung. He has been greatly excited, and his brain is affected. No one else will be likely to take it.”

He prepared his medicine and gave his orders. Mr. Martin followed him to the door: “Will he live?”

“The chances are against him.”

The fever increased, and he raved like a madman. On Thursday it took four men to keep him in his bed. That was to have been his wedding day. Phebe lay in her coffin out on the porch, where all could pass around and see her. She was robed in the simple white dress that was to have been her wedding gown. A white rose lay in her hand. Everybody said: “How natural she looks!” A large procession followed her to her last resting place in Pigeon Creek churchyard. Strong men wept as the earth rattled down on the lid of her coffin. Dr. Taggart tried to administer words of comfort to the afflicted family, but he knew not what to say. “I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou did'st it,” was about the amount of it.

When the grave was well rounded up, they went back to their homes to take up the burdens and duties of life again. Meantime Paul raved on.

Dr. Gray was again sent for, and did all that he could. The patient had a strong hold on life. Seven days—fourteen days—twenty-one days before the fever died down. Dr. Clark stood at his bedside as he had stood at that other bedside three weeks before, and gave his orders. “I would not give him any more medicine. Make him as comfortable as possible. There will probably be a change about the middle of the night.”

Tom slipped out and waited his coming. “Is there no hope?”

“Yes, there is some hope; but, Tom, if I were in your place, I would leave it all in the hands of a higher power. I would not ask for his life to be spared.”

“What do you mean?”

“He might live and”—

“And what?”

“And not be the same that he was. His brain has been badly affected. If he should live, I do not know how it will be. Keep him quiet, and do not deceive him about anything. If he asks any questions, tell him the truth.”

Tom went in resigned. How slowly the hands moved around the face of the old clock. The fever was gone and Paul lay in a sort of a stupor. As it neared midnight he opened his eyes.

“Mother!”

“What, Paul?”

“Am I dying?”

“No, I hope not.”

“It seems to me that I am. I cannot move.”

“Do not try; you are very weak.”

He looked around.

“Do you want anything?”

“Yes.”

“What is it?”

“Phebe.”

“It is night, Paul,” replied his mother evasively. He dozed again. After a little he opened his eyes and looked around as if trying to think.

“Let us give him a sleeping powder.”

“The doctor said not.”

In the morning he slept an hour, and seemed to be a little stronger when he awoke. “Tom,” he whispered.

Tom bent his ear to his lips.

“Is Phebe dead?”

“Yes.”

“When did she die?”

“About three weeks ago.”

They gave him a little broth, and again sleep, nature’s sweet restorer, came to his relief.

The doctor found him better. “Good nursing, plenty of sleep, and chicken broth will bring him around all right,” he declared.

The doctor was right. It took time and care, but his naturally strong constitution asserted itself, and he gradually regained his former health,

CHAPTER XIII.

RESIGNATION.

As soon as Paul was pronounced out of danger Dr. Taggart was admitted to his room.

“I am glad to see you better.”

“Thank you.”

Paul lay as if in deep thought. After awhile he whispered: “Doctor.”

“What, Paul?”

“I treated you awfully that night; I am afraid I struck you.”

“Never mind about that; think about getting well.”

“Tell me if I did.”

“No, you did not. You pushed me out of your way a little when I would not let you go. You had the fever then, and did not know what you were doing.”

“I do not think that I did.”

Again he seemed to be thinking. “Doctor.”

“Well?”

“Forgive me and bear with me. My life is completely wrecked.”

“I have nothing to forgive. I will go and let you rest.”

Martin did not make any apparent effort to gain strength. When he was better his friends tried to

induce him to go out and get the pure, fresh air, and meet some cheerful society, hoping that it would contribute to his speedy recovery. He did not care to see any one, and stayed very close to the house.

“Mother, come and sit down here. I want to talk with you.”

His mother took the offered seat.

“I am not strong yet, but I suppose I must go to work and do something. You and father have had a great deal of trouble with me. I do not hope ever to be able to repay you, but I am going to look out for myself. From this on I will cease to be the burden that I have been.”

“We are glad to do all we can for you. We do not feel that you are a burden, but when you are strong enough we know that you will want to get to your work. Do you want to go to Ohio, or would you like to take something else?”

“That is what I want to talk about. I cannot go there, I could not stand it, and that is not the worst of it.”

“What is the worst?”

“I hate to tell you, but you will have to know, and I may as well. I am not going to preach.”

“You are not? What do you mean?”

“I am not fit to preach. I was honest. I thought I was following the plain leadings of Providence. I must have made a mistake.”

“How, when, what?”

“When I decided to go to the seminary, God

knows that I was sincere. I know now that I am utterly unfit for the work. I could not preach a sermon to save my life."

"That is because you have been sick; you are not strong yet. You will feel different when you get well."

"No, that is not it. I cannot stand up in the pulpit and tell other people what to do when I do not walk in that path myself. If a blind man attempts to lead the blind, both will fall into the ditch. I am blind myself, and I will not be guilty of the folly of attempting to show the way to others."

"You preached several times very acceptably to everybody that heard you before you were taken sick, and I cannot see how a spell of fever could unfit you for doing it again when you get over it."

"It is not the fever. I am over that. I do not quite understand what it is, but I know I have no business in the pulpit. My heart is as hard as a rock."

"You ought to see Dr. Taggart. Are you able to go there? If not, we will send for him."

"I do not want to see him. I treated him badly."

"He would be glad to see you. He does not lay up anything against you."

"I suppose that Dr. Taggart is a Christian. I am not."

"O Paul! Paul!"

“I do not want to distress you. I would rather not tell you, but I am not a hypocrite.”

“Paul, you must not forget that you have been a professor for nearly ten years.”

“I know I have, and I have told you, mother, that I was sincere. I thought I was. I know now that it was all a mistake.”

Mrs. Martin was overcome with grief. She left Paul, and as soon as she could she gave an account of the interview to her husband and Tom.

“I will tell you one thing, mother,” said Tom, “I believe that there is something wrong with Paul’s mind. Dr. Clark told me when he was at the worst that he might get well and not be the same that he was.”

Mr. Martin was deeply moved. “My son, O my son!” he wailed.

That afternoon the distressed father went to see Dr. Clark.

“I think you are all unnecessarily alarmed,” said the doctor. “Paul will come around all right. He was never sick before, and it went hard with him. He is weak yet.”

“He is getting stronger. He talked about going to work, and said he could not preach; he even said he is not a Christian.”

“Did he go to the seminary of his own accord, or was he persuaded into it?”

“He decided for himself.”

“Then he has no one but himself to blame if he did make a mistake.”

"He does not blame any one. What shall we do?"

"I cannot tell. It is not a case for a doctor, but I shall call around to-morrow and see Paul."

Mr. Martin was not much comforted, and went to Dr. Taggart's.

"Paul has acted very strangely," said the Doctor.

"He took Phebe's death very hard. I am afraid that and the fever has been too much for him. It is very sad."

"Do you think his mind is affected?"

"I do not know. Dr. Clark ought to be a better judge of that. I have noticed that Paul has a strange look out of his eyes, and he has been quiet and reserved ever since he was sick."

"Phebe's death is enough to account for that."

"Not altogether. It came on him suddenly, and of course it was a shock, but other men have met with greater trials. It was not as bad as it would have been if they had been married."

"It was more than he could stand. It has nearly killed him."

"Men lose their wives with whom they have lived for fifteen or twenty years, and they do not die or go crazy. Paul was a Christian. The grace of God is sufficient for him."

"Then why is he so changed?"

"I would rather not say, but I am afraid his brain has suffered from the fever. Does he talk much about Phebe?"

“No, he never mentions her, and neither do the rest of us.”

Mr. Martin returned to his home with a heavy heart. He wanted to talk to Paul about himself, but he was afraid that he might make matters worse.

The next morning Dr. Clark stopped as he was going past. He expressed his satisfaction at finding his recent patient so much improved, and asked him when he expected to be able to go to his work.

“I do not know what I am going to do, doctor. I am all at sea. I have abandoned the idea of going to Ohio.”

“Why? Have they got another preacher?”

“I do not know whether they have or not. I am not competent to fill the place. I am not fit to preach at all.”

“I hardly think you are. You had better not attempt to preach for a while; you might break down. It would be a good idea, if the place is still open, to go and do pastoral work, visit the people, and, after you have gotten a little acquainted, gradually take up the pulpit work. You are not as strong as you were before you were sick, and it will be some time before you are. You need a change; the best thing you can do is to go among strangers and make yourself useful.”

“That is not what I mean. I think I am strong enough. I am getting better every day, I will soon be well; but I am not the devoted, sincere, conse-

crated Christian that a preacher ought to be. I am no hypocrite, and I have made up my mind that I will not try to preach."

"If that is true, it is a pity that you did not find it out before you went to the seminary."

"If what is true?"

"If it is true that you are not the kind of a Christian that a preacher ought to be. It seems a pity to spend three years of time, and the money that you did, to prepare yourself for a work that you cannot do."

"I know that. I wish I had died."

"No, you do not. I took a prominent part in preventing a fatal termination of your sickness, and I think I am entitled to a little gratitude, if I never get anything more."

"I beg your pardon, doctor. I am grateful to you for what you did for me, and to all the rest, but I—I—I am so—I do not know what is the matter with me."

"I do."

"Tell me."

"You are morbid; that is all. You stay at home too much. There comes George Jones. Jump into his wagon and ride over to see your sister. She will be glad to see you, and it will do you more good than all the medicine I have."

"How will I get back?"

"Walk back."

"I am not sure that I can."

"I am sure. If it makes you sick, I will treat

you free of charge. I must go now. George, stop a minute; Paul wants a ride."

"All right, come on," said George.

Paul walked slowly out to the road and climbed languidly into the wagon.

"I am glad you are getting well," said George cordially. "When are you going to Ohio?"

"I do not know," Paul replied. "They may have gotten another man by this time."

"No, they have not. Dr. Taggart said this morning they have written to him to know when you can go."

"I am not sure that I will go at all."

"You ought to go. They need you, and they have waited all this time for you to get well. If you could have taken Phebe there, you can surely stand it yourself."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, you know a new country is always harder on a woman than on a man. She was willing to give up her home and all her friends, and go among strangers, and put up with all the hardships, to give you a chance to do your duty; and now I think it would be easier for you to go alone."

"It is not easy for me to live without Phebe."

"I did not mean that. I meant the living in a new country. They say that preachers have a pretty hard time of it in the West, and I suppose they have. A single man can probably get along better than a married one in some respects. Phebe has gone where she cannot know anything about

it, but I am sure that if she did know she would want you to go ahead and do your duty."

"I am sure she would."

"Phebe was Martha's bridesmaid the day we were married, and I remember she said that day that when a man did right happiness was sure to come to him. I tried to do right, and I am very happy. If you do right, you will be happy too. You ought to go on just as you were going to do."

"I will try to do right. I am glad you told me about that."

Paul left the wagon and surprised his sister with an unexpected visit. While she was preparing a tempting dinner he sat under a shade tree and did some serious thinking. His thoughts ran in a more healthy channel than they had done since his illness. He prayed to that God who turns no one away. He remembered the promise: "I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." He conquered his rebellious will. The Spirit of God again bore witness with his spirit that he was a child of God, an heir to eternal life. He was enabled to say: "Thy will be done." When he arrived at home he found his father and mother, his brother Tom, and Dr. Taggart all on the porch engaged in earnest conversation.

"Why, Paul!" exclaimed the Doctor, "you are looking better. When will you be ready to start to Ohio?"

"Is the place still open to me?"

“O yes; they want you. They are anxiously waiting for you.”

“I think I will be able to go in a few days. I thought of giving the work up. I have had a battle with myself, but have conquered.”

“You mean that you have conquered yourself?”

“Yes.”

“Then you have won a great victory. The Scripture says: ‘He that ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city.’”

When the Doctor was ready to go home, Paul accompanied him to the gate, and at parting said: “I will have to do my work without Phebe.”

“The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away,” quoted the Doctor.

Paul added: “Blessed be the name of the Lord.”

Now that he had fairly begun to mend, his recovery was rapid. When he had come to himself he remembered everything. He did not need to be urged on and asked when he would be ready to go. He was afraid to trust himself, and was anxious to get to his work. Phebe’s death was his first great trial, and he had been found wanting. He had a long talk with Dr. Taggart, during which he told him that he had wanted to give up his ministry, because he felt unworthy of his high calling. The Doctor was very tender with him. He advised him to go on with his work, and reminded him of his oration on the day of graduation. “Life is a probation from the cradle to the

grave.” His bereavement was to be received by him as a part of his probation. He had not done anything worse than Peter, when he cursed and swore and said, “I know not the man;” and yet the Master had said to him after that, “Feed my sheep.”

Paul cried again unto the Lord from the depths. The Lord heard and again sent him an answer of peace. He was comforted. As a mother comforteth her child even so the Lord comforted Paul.

CHAPTER XIV.

MISSIONARY WORK.

MARTIN went to Ohio and entered upon his work a consecrated young man. He found that Mr. Edwards had been gone for some months, and there had only been an occasional service since his departure. The few members of his church had become discouraged, and some of them had gone into other folds. They had no house of worship, and not much of an organization. Martin called a meeting in a log schoolhouse, of all members and adherents to the Presbyterian Church, and met with them. There were present at that initial meeting two men and five women. It was a small beginning, but there was an abundance of material for missionary work in that community. Martin did faithful service all that winter, preaching in season and out of season. He visited the sick, officiated at the funerals of the dead, and as far as he could alleviated the wants of the poor and needy.

A few were gathered into the ark of safety, and a Sabbath school was organized. The people were generally poor, many of them having emigrated to the West because they had not succeeded in making a comfortable living in the East. As

a rule none of them were noted for piety. When spring approached, the constant and open violation of the Sabbath pained Martin deeply. It was the one day in the week set apart by the women for visiting, and by the men for hunting and fishing. As he became acquainted with the people he did all that he could to turn the tide. The women reasoned with him. They told him of their hard lot in life. For six days every week they were in a constant round of cooking and sweeping, milking and churning, washing and ironing. Sunday was the only day they had for recreation, and they could see no harm in going to see a neighbor or in receiving a few visitors in their homes. Sometimes the men laughed at him, and once in a while some one more hardened than the rest swore at him. One Sabbath on his way from preaching to a small, unappreciative congregation, he met a party of hunters, with their guns and their game. He knew the most of them.

“Good day, Parson. Have a squirrel?” said one as they came up to him.

He was not quite sure whether it was offered in genuine courtesy, in sport, or in derision.

“No, thank you,” he replied pleasantly. “If it was yesterday or to-morrow, I would gladly accept it.”

“Why not to-day?”

“Because I do not think that it is right to hunt on the Sabbath.”

“The squirrel will taste just the same.”

“Yes, I dare say it will, but it is wrong.”

“What is wrong about it?”

“It is a violation of the Sabbath.”

“Pshaw, Sunday is made for rest.”

“Is hunting resting?”

“Yes. It is not working. It is as much resting as going to church is.”

“Perhaps so. I do not regard the Sabbath as intended for idleness. We are to rest from our usual week day employment.”

“We have got you there. Hunting is not our usual week day employment, but what is Sunday intended for according to your notion?”

“I think it is set apart for the worship of God.”

“Say, Squire—I beg your pardon—Parson, what are you after out here, any way? We fellows have no money.”

“I am after your souls.”

“You won’t git much if you git ’em,” laughed one.

“Parson, may I put in a word?”

“O yes, what is it?”

“Why do you keep on preaching to the ones that have got religion? Why don’t you preach to us that need it?”

“You do not give me a chance.”

They all laughed, and one replied: “I gave you a chance. I went to hear you once and you did not say a word that hit me.”

“Try me again, and I will do better.”

It was laughingly agreed that they would all go

to hear him preach when he came to his next appointment, which would be in two weeks. The men told their fellow-sinners, and they told their friends, and the result was that the service was well advertised. A great many went to that meeting who had never heard Martin preach, and some who had seldom heard any one.

Paul prepared himself for the work, and went with a strong faith in his Heavenly Father and a modest confidence in himself. When he rode up to the schoolhouse, he found it full of expectant people, and as many on the outside as the inside. There seemed to be an indefinite idea prevailing that there was going to be some fun. After a little consultation, the seats were carried out for the women, while the men found plenty of room on the ground. A small platform was prepared for Martin, that he might be seen and heard. The people were not only willing but anxious to give him a chance. After the usual opening exercises, he rose and said: "Those of you who have brought Bibles will find the text in the eighth verse of the twenty-first chapter of Revelations. It reads: 'But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.'"

He closed his Bible, and glanced over his audience. "It is not necessary that I should de-

scribe these different classes of people. My subject is 'The Second Death.' "

Martin preached to his congregation, and they heard every word that he said. At first some of them were amused, then angry. After a little they became interested, and some of them frightened. The preacher brought his nine years of training to his aid, and that lovely Sabbath morning he preached to those uncultured backwoodsmen as if his own soul's salvation depended on that hour's work. He was helped by the Holy Spirit, and his efforts were not in vain. Hearts were touched. The most of the company stayed for the second sermon, which was short, from the words: "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy."

From that day Martin was a power in that community. Even his enemies respected him.

One day an awkward young man rode up to his boarding place, and called out: "Halloo! Is the parson at home?"

"Yes."

"Tell him to come out here. I want to see him." Martin went out and met the man who had offered him the squirrel on that memorable Sabbath morning.

"Say, parson; are you a licensed preacher?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Well, Rach Wolf and me are going to be hitched day after to-morrow, and we want you to do the job. Do you know where old man Wolf lives?"

Martin's eyes filled with tears, and he did not reply.

"Heavens and earth! What's the matter? You don't want her, do you?"

"Bob, the girl that was to have been my wife is dead. It hurts me to think of it. I will marry you. What time do you want the ceremony?"

"About ten o'clock. I'm sorry for you. I could get the Squire. You would just as lief as not?"

"O yes."

"What will you charge?"

"I will not make any charge."

"All right; you will be sure to be there?"

"Yes."

Bob rode off, and it suddenly occurred to Martin that he had never married any one, and he was not sure that he had a legal right to do so. He consulted Squire Foster.

"Have you a license?"

"Yes."

"Well, if you have a license from the court, that is all that is required."

"License from the court? My license is from the Presbytery."

"Have you no license from Wooster?"

"No."

"Then you can't marry."

"Whom can I get to take my place?"

"Just wait a minute. Do not be in too big a hurry. You are a licensed preacher?"

"Yes."

“Have you got papers to show for it?”

“Yes; I have my license.”

“Well, you just take a fool’s advice. You just git on that horse of yourn, and go to Wooster tomorrow, and take your papers, and git a license to marry. It won’t cost you much, and you know plenty there that’ll go on your bond. You don’t want it to git out that you can’t marry. You don’t want to lower yourself.”

The next day Martin visited the capital of the county and secured credentials that he was authorized to unite all proper persons in the holy bonds of matrimony. As he was leaving the courthouse, he was surprised to hear: “Halloo, Parson Martin! wait a minute.”

He turned and met Bob Smith.

“It is lucky for me that you are here; I want you to vouch for me.”

“What is that?”

“I’m up after my license. I just want you to go with me to the clerk’s office and tell them I can keep Rach in grub and clothes.”

“Why, Bob; I would like to oblige you, but I do not know anything about it. Is Mr. Wolf willing for his daughter to marry you?”

“Yes; he’s going to give us a big blow out. I know my ability. You can just say that it is all right.”

Martin went with Smith to the office, and the clerk filled up a license. “Do you vouch for the young man?” glancing at Martin.

“It is all right as far as I know.”

“That will do; just write your name there,” indicating the place.

Martin wrote his name, wondering if he had assumed the relation of godfather to Bob, and if he would be called on for a supply of ham and potatoes if the larder ever became empty.

The wedding the next day was largely attended. The parties most deeply concerned had not been exclusive in regard to invitations.

The officiating clergyman performed his part with dignity, and after the ceremony mingled with the people. He talked a few minutes with a group of giggling girls, and was astounded, a little later, to hear one of them say: “That fool preacher is in love with every one of us girls.”

He listened for the reply, which came from the bridegroom: “He wouldn’t touch one of you with a forty-foot pole.”

The hero of those exalted remarks smiled. He had no affinity with such associations, and as soon as he could he bade them good-by, and returned to his home, where he spent the evening in selecting a text and preparing a subject for his next sermon, when he would be permitted to preach to a large crowd, drawn together by the fact that the newly married couple would on that occasion “make their appearance” at church. Martin thought of his Pennsylvania home and his home friends, but he was contented. Since he was doomed to go through the world alone, he felt that it was better

that he be sacrificed on the altar, than a man who had a wife to be offered up with him. He was happy in the knowledge that he was sowing the seed given him to sow. He was aware that much of it fell upon stony ground, and that some came up and was choked out. He also knew that some fell upon good ground, and took deep root and, springing up, bore good fruit, in some hearts thirty, in some sixty, and in some a hundred fold.

CHAPTER XV.

A CALL.

MARTIN expected a good audience when he preached the next time at Cross Roads. He was not disappointed. He was surprised at the number of people present, and wondered where they all came from. He knew that many of them were there for the purpose of witnessing an important social event. Bob Smith and his wife "made their appearance." Martin did his best to make it pay them for coming. As was his usual custom, he went from his closet to his pulpit. He gave more than the usual time to the preparation of his sermon, and the consciousness that he was prepared to handle his subject intelligently gave him a confidence in himself that helped him to do his best. While he was preaching he noticed in his congregation, a benevolent-looking stranger who was better dressed than the rural inhabitants to whom he ministered from time to time. He had an intelligent, dignified bearing that attracted Martin's particular notice. Furthermore, he gave his undivided attention to the discourse, and at the close of the services he quietly, almost mysteriously, disappeared. The people nearly all waited to shake hands with the preacher and the bride and groom.

No one noticed the stranger, and Martin did not have an opportunity to speak to him. On Monday morning he called at the rustic abode which the preacher called home, and sought an introduction to the young missionary. It came out in the course of the conversation that the distinguished-looking visitor was a committee of one, sent to hear Martin preach; and if in his matured judgment he considered it desirable, he was to invite him to preach in the vacant pulpit of Ashland, in an adjoining county. Rev. Hugh Watson, their pastor, had died recently, and his wife and children had gone back to their people in Pennsylvania, and the bereaved congregation were looking around for another pastor. They paid a salary of five hundred dollars a year, in consequence of which they were able to command almost unlimited talent. The fame of the brilliant young preacher had reached them, and they were anxious to hear him preach.

Mr. Robert Moore, who was one of the most influential elders, did not wish to raise in the breast of the young man any hopes that might not be realized. He told him that it would be well for him to get a short leave of absence and make a visit to Ashland. Martin acted upon the suggestion, and stopped by invitation at the hospitable home of Mr. Moore, and was introduced by him to his wife and family as the popular young preacher from Wayne County.

No one had ever told him that his services were

appreciated, and he was as much surprised as pleased. Mr. Moore was one of the leading business men of Ashland, as well as an elder in the Presbyterian Church. His home was one of refinement and culture, and almost elegance for that time and place. There were three young ladies in the family, who felt it their duty to entertain their father's guest. It was work that they were accustomed to, and they performed the pleasant task to the best of their ability. Paul was entertained. It was a new life, and reminded him of his congenial surroundings at the home of Mr. Black, in Allegheny. He went from his closet to that vacant pulpit, and the Holy Spirit went with him. The congregation were delighted with his sermon, and evidently he was their coming man. The only question was: Would he wear? That question could only be answered by time. There was a meeting or two of the session, and an arrangement was made to send a licentiate to do Martin's work in Wayne County, and he was to remain in Ashland as a stated supply.

Verily, Paul Martin was then on probation. He had plenty of it. He boarded in the family of a widow, who eked out a slender income by taking boarders. He made pastoral visits and social visits. He slighted no one, and had a friendly word for all. He was about his Father's business, winning souls for Christ, and it seemed to him that he would rather work in that particular vineyard than any other of which he had any knowl-

edge. He had been in Wayne about a year, and, although he had shirked no responsibility, he felt that the pastorate would be immeasurably more congenial than the mission.

One day as he passed down the principal street of the village he was accosted: "Halloo, Parson!"

He looked around. "Well, Bob Smith!"

"How are you flourishing?"

After a short conversation Bob accepted an invitation to dinner. At the table he inquired: "When are you coming home?"

"I do not know?"

"He is not going home at all. We are going to keep him here," said Mrs. Sims.

"Thunder and lightning! He's got to go home. They can't get along without him." The boarders all laughed at the outburst, and Mrs. Sims assured Smith that Ashland could not get along without him either, Smith was in Ashland on a matter of business, and his meeting with Paul was an accident. His invitation to dine was due to Martin's natural social disposition. A few days later Samuel West, an elder, who lived in the country, went into Moore's store.

"What are we going to do about a preacher?"

"I do not know. It seems that we are doing very well as it is. Martin is giving good satisfaction, is he not?"

"Yes, but it is not going to last."

"Why not?"

"They say there was a fellow here from

Wayne the other day to see about his going back."

"O, he will not go."

"I do not know. Any way we ought to have a pastor; we have had supplies long enough."

"I have no objection."

"Well, let us put our shoulders to the wheel and go to work. Suppose you sound him, and find out the least he can be had for."

"You think he is the man?"

"Yes, if we can get him cheap enough."

"We paid Watson five hundred."

"We do not want to pay Martin that."

"Why not?"

"He does not need it; he has no family."

"That will not do."

"It will do. You do not suppose the congregation is going to pay a big salary to a young man that has nobody to keep but himself, do you?"

"We ought to pay a fair price for the work done."

"He will not hurt himself working; preachers never do. You see him."

When Mr. Moore went home that evening he met Martin just leaving the house. "Wait a minute. Come in and have supper with us."

"O no, thank you," hesitatingly.

"Come on. We may not have much to eat, but you can take potluck."

Martin went back and waited in the parlor while the company china and silver were hastily

brought out in the dining room. Moore thought of business, and remarked jokingly: "Mr. Martin, if you never intend to marry, and will agree to live on corndodgers and potatoes, we might give you a call here."

"I am not thinking of getting married," replied the candidate for pastoral honors.

"You ought to be thinking of it. Every preacher ought to have a wife to preside over the sewing society, and to afford the women a lively topic of conversation."

"Not a very pleasant outlook for the lady."

"You have never been a pastor, and you have not made the discovery that you and your wife and children, and all your relations and all her relations, exist for the convenience of the congregation."

Supper was announced, and the good elder noticed that Martin was able to dispose of a creditable amount of cake and preserves. "He has been used to good living, and he ought to have it," was the conclusion to which he arrived.

Bob Smith's trip to Ashland did much to stir up the people to a sense of their duty. To be sure, he was not a member of the Church, but he took the trouble to find out about Martin's chances, and was without doubt authorized to do so. The good people of Ashland wanted a pastor, and they wanted Martin, but no one took the lead. That had been generally Moore's work, but he seemed at that time to be the most indifferent man in the church.

Elder John Robinson laid in wait for him after the services on Sabbath. "Hadn't you better call a congregational meeting soon?"

"What for?"

"To vote on a preacher."

"You had better call it yourself."

Elder Robinson met Elder West. "Hadn't we better call a meeting to vote on a preacher?"

"Yes, the sooner the better. I was talking to Moore about it the other day."

"What did he say?"

"Not much of anything."

"That is strange. I tell you what, I believe that Moore does not like Martin."

"What has he against him?"

"I do not know, but he does not take any interest in getting him."

"Martin is my man."

"And mine too."

The other elders were interviewed, and the result was that Martin was given a notice to read from the pulpit, which called a meeting of the session the next Tuesday evening. Every member was present, and Robinson was called to the chair. He stated the object of the meeting in few words, it being to take the preliminary steps toward securing a pastor. There was a free expression of opinion from all except Moore, who remained obstinately silent.

"We would like to hear from Moore," said the chairman.

He rose to his feet. "I hardly know. I have nothing against Martin, but it might be well to hear some one else preach before we decide."

"If he suits us, what is the use?"

"Does he suit us?"

"He suits me."

"And me."

"And me."

"All right, he will suit me," said Moore.

"What about salary?" inquired West.

"The congregation will have to fix that."

A congregational meeting was appointed, and there was an incredible amount of electioneering, considering that there was only one candidate in the field.

Elder Moore was nominated for chairman, but positively declined the honor. An idea prevailed that Moore was unfriendly to Martin, and that was regarded as conclusive evidence. Robinson was elected to the chair, and it was thought best to decide the amount of salary they could pay first.

Elder West moved that it be three hundred dollars a year.

Elder Moore offered an amendment that it be six hundred.

After a lengthy war of words five hundred was decided upon.

Nominations were then in order. Elder James Reed nominated the Rev. Paul Martin. Elder West seconded the nomination.

"Is there any other candidate?" inquired the chairman, as he glanced in the direction of Elder Moore.

"I have none."

Remarks were called for, and a good deal of eloquence was wasted. After every one had had a chance to speak, the vote was taken. Everybody stood up except Elder Moore.

"We would like to have a unanimous vote," said the chairman. "I hope we are all agreed?"

"Certainly," replied Moore, as he arose to his feet. The vote was then unanimous.

Elders Reed and Moore were appointed to confer with the pastor elect.

Martin rejoiced in the good fortune that had come to him. He was glad that he suited the people and that they wanted his services, and he was glad because of the change it would make in his manner of living. His social surroundings would be so much more congenial, and his salary would be nearly doubled. He accepted the "call;" and at a meeting of the Presbytery, convened for that purpose, he was duly installed as pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Ashland.

CHAPTER XVI.

MARRIED.

MARTIN continued to call at Elder Moore's. He was told that that gentleman was not very favorably inclined toward him, and he thought he would conciliate him. Every time he went from his boarding place to the business part of the village he passed the Moore residence, and it was easy to stop. The young ladies were never busy, at least never too busy to entertain the young pastor. One evening he stopped, as was his custom, and Mary went to meet him. "I am sorry Sue and Bell are both away."

"Out of town?"

"O no; they are only out to supper, but they will not be home until late."

"It does not matter. I just called as I was passing."

Martin lingered until he heard them coming, and spoke to them as he went out.

"Well, Mary Moore, I declare; you had a beau," exclaimed Sue, almost before he was out of hearing.

"We have him every evening."

"Yes, but you had him all to yourself to-night."

"Good reason why. Let me do the visiting, and you can have him the next time."

"I do not want him. Jim is nearly to the point. You and Bell may toss a penny for him."

"And starve to death," said Bell. "You will never catch me being a preacher's wife, not unless it is the last forlorn chance."

"Wait until some preacher wants you," said Mary.

"It seems to be taking the Rev. Paul Martin a good while to make up his mind whom he does want. He is nearly forty."

"He is twenty-seven," said Mary.

"Mercy on us! Has he been showing you the family record?"

"He told me his age."

Mary went upstairs.

"Sue Moore, I believe Mr. Martin likes our Mary."

"And I believe our Mary likes Mr. Martin."

"What would father say?"

"He would be furious."

"Still it would be nice."

"Yes, it would."

The girls followed their sister upstairs. The next day Bell dusted the parlor and arranged the furniture with unusual care. Sue went in.

"I am fixing up for his reverence."

"Why, Bell; are you going to set your cap for a parson, and starve to death, after all?"

"No, I am doing a sisterly turn for Mary. There are too many of us girls. It is time that some of us were off."

“I shall soon be gone. There is one thing, I have thought of. If Mr. Martin does come to see Mary, it looks too bad the way we crowd in and make a family party of it.”

“We cannot assume that he does.”

“We can find out.”

The girls put their fun-loving heads together, and formed a plan. When Mr. Martin called the next time there was no one in sight. He knocked gently on the open door.

Bell hurried to the kitchen. “He has come, Jane; be sure and do not laugh.”

The maid of all work went to the door, and demurely ushered him into the parlor. She gave him a chair, and as she turned to go she asked: “Whom do you wish to see?”

Martin hardly understood, but the girl was waiting politely. He collected his scattered wits and replied: “Miss Mary.”

Jane returned to the kitchen and reported. Bell was delighted. “Where is Mary, mother; where is Mary? Mr. Martin is here.”

“She has gone out with Emma Reed; call Sue.”

“Sue has an awful headache.”

“Well, go to the parlor yourself. Do not keep him waiting all day.”

“I am so sorry to have kept you waiting, Mr. Martin. Sister Mary is not at home, and mother sent me in to entertain you. If you are not in too much of a hurry, she will be back soon.”

He was not in a hurry. He had called just as

he was in the habit of calling, to see all of them. He enjoyed society, and there he found the best in the village. Presently Mary came up the walk, and Bell called out of the open window: "Mary, come in here."

Mary entered, and with an "Excuse me" Bell was gone. Paul stayed awhile, with an uncomfortable feeling that he was intruding. He had never felt so before, but he thought it was possible he was monopolizing too much of their time. He noticed when he left that she did not ask him to call again. He kept away for a few days. One evening after supper he joined Mrs. Sims on the porch. She was unusually talkative.

"Mr. Martin, how long is it since you left Pennsylvania?"

"About a year and a half."

"So long as that."

"Yes, a little longer. I came in October, a year last October."

"Have you never been back?"

"No."

"You know, Mr. Martin, people will talk. You have been here six months, and we have all thought you would be going back after a wife."

"O no."

"You do not seem to be much of a ladies' man. Have you got acquainted with many of the girls?"

"Some of them."

"You ought to let me pick out a wife for you. I know the girls."

“Whom would you select?”

“Emma Reed.”

“She is a nice girl.”

“Yes, and she would make a splendid preacher’s wife. She is most too young for you, but you are not as old as you look.”

“How old do I look?”

“About thirty-five.”

“I am not quite twenty-eight.”

“Well, you are old enough to be looking up a wife. Sue Moore would make a good minister’s wife, but they say she is engaged to Jim Hood. Any way, her father would take the roof off the house.”

Martin was interested. “Did you say Sue Moore is engaged?”

“That is the talk. It does not make any difference to you,” she added, laughing. “Her father would put her in a nunnery before he would let her marry a preacher.”

“Why?”

“Well, he is rich, and he only has them three girls, and they spend a mint of money. He knows no preacher could keep them up the way he does, and he would not want them to come down in the world and be poor. They are all in the Church, and they are good girls, but they have been raised too extravagant to marry any poor preacher.”

Martin discreetly withdrew, and did a great deal of thinking that night. He thought tenderly of Phebe lying in the churchyard at Pigeon Creek.

He was young, with life all before him, and he needed companionship. He needed Mary Moore, and he knew that her father had been rather opposed to him ever since he had been there. It would require considerable nerve to ask him for his daughter, but he laid his plans and proceeded to execute them. He saw Sue Moore sitting on the steps one evening as he was about to pass, and he stopped and went up to her. "I am glad you are alone; I want to see you," was his greeting. He was scarcely seated when Mrs. Moore and Bell joined them. Sue could not restrain her curiosity. She went into the parlor, and, throwing open a window, said: "Come in here, Mr. Martin."

Mrs. Moore and Bell heard her, for she intended them to hear. Paul did her bidding.

"My stars!" exclaimed Mrs. Moore. "What does Sue mean?"

"I do not know."

"What will he think of her?"

"Sue knows what she is about. There is something we do not know."

"They cannot have any secrets?"

"No, I suppose not."

"It is a queer way for a preacher to act. I wish he would not come here so much."

"Mother, it is Sue that is responsible for the queer. Just wait until he is gone." It seemed as if they would have a long wait, although with his characteristic energy he plunged into his business.

He told her how restful he had found her father's home, and that he wanted Mary for his own.

“Why did you come to me?”

Then he told her of Phebe, how he had loved and lost, of his own life before and since. He showed her his watch with “Paul and Phebe” graven on the case, which had been quietly given him before leaving for his missionary field. When there was nothing more to tell, he said: “I do not know that she will have me, but I could not ask her to be my wife without first letting her know, and you can tell her so much better than I can.”

Sue promised him her aid, and in her he had a wonderful ally. When he was gone, Mrs. Moore and Bell were eager to know what it all meant.

“I can't tell.”

“Now, Sue!” said Mrs. Moore.

“Did he ask you to marry him?” quizzed Bell.

“He did not.”

“Then you might tell.”

“If the pastor of the Ashland Presbyterian Church does me the honor to make me the confidante of all his joys and sorrows, I must regard that confidence as sacred,” said Sue theatrically.

“You invited his confidence; at least you invited him into the parlor.”

“After he had implored a private audience;” and Sue went in search of Mary.

Mrs. Moore felt it her duty to tell her husband about the mysterious call. “I believe Mr. Martin has a notion of Sue.”

"I'm glad of that."

"Robert Moore! You would not let him have her?"

"Certainly not. She does not want him. She will accept Jim Hood if he can summon courage enough to ask her."

"Would that suit you?"

"I do not know as I would care. If she is going to marry, she will not likely do any better?"

Mrs. Moore's thoughts strayed into a new channel. In her contemplation of white satin and orange blossoms she forgot the existence of the poor preacher. Sue could not find Mary, and she had to wait until the next day when she told her the story.

Mary was perplexed.

"Do you love him, dear?"

"I do not believe I want to marry any man who has come so near marrying another woman; but then he has not asked me to."

"You know he will; and if you do not care for him, you can tell him so, and that will be the end of it. If you love him, I am sorry for you."

"Do you think that would be so very unfortunate?"

"It certainly would, for you would have a hard row to hoe. He only gets five hundred dollars a year. They might raise his salary a little if he was to marry, but they will not pay enough, and it would be scrimp and economize all your life."

"Then you would not have him?"

“No, I would not, but then I do not love him. If I did, I would marry him if I had to run off with him to get him, and that is about what you will have to do.”

“Then there is no use in talking. A preacher could not run off with a girl.”

They both laughed.

“Little sister, I will tell you something. I am engaged.”

“Sue Moore!”

“It is a fact, I am. If you do not believe it, I will prove it by Jim.”

“I will take your word for it.”

“We are going to be married in September. Jim has a good business, and I do not think father will object; but if he does, it will make no difference. We shall be married all the same.”

“You think he would object to Mr. Martin?”

“I know he would, but with me to help you, we will see what can be done. Do you love him?”

“I do not know yet. Let me think until after I see him.”

Martin did not stop at Moore's every day or two as he used to do. He dreaded going, lest it might be the last time. He was also in a dilemma about money matters. His father had given him his education, and it had cost more than could be given any other member of the family. He could not ask for more. He was out of debt, and although he knew nothing of the cost of a household, he

had a vague idea that his five hundred would go but a little way in the Moore establishment. He noticed plenty of small houses, and he thought it might be that they could live somewhere on his pittance. At last he called, and Jane went to the door.

"Is Miss Mary in?"

"I think so. I'll see."

Mary went to the parlor.

After a little talk he began: "Did Miss Sue tell you?"

"About the young lady? Yes."

"Then it remains for me to tell you that I love you. Will you be my wife?"

"I do not know."

"You want time to think?"

"No, it is not that exactly. I have thought a good deal since Sue told me."

"What is it?"

"Do you love me as much as you did the young lady that is dead?"

Paul drew a chair close to her, and as he sat down he took her hand. "I love you more than any one living. I cannot measure my love. I love you with the same kind of love that I loved Phebe. I want you to be my wife. I will do my best to make you happy."

She looked at the flowers in the carpet.

He laid his arm on the back of her chair.

She continued looking at the carpet.

He drew her to his breast. "Miss Mary."

“Paul.”

“Do you love me?”

“Yes.”

He sealed the betrothal with a kiss. Neither thought of the lonely grave at Pigeon Creek. They loved each other, and love brings happiness.

The next evening when the family were at the supper table Jane announced: “The preacher’s in the parlor, and he asked for Mr. Moore.”

“What in the deuce does he want?”

“I expect he wants me,” said Sue mischievously.

“He can have you and welcome.” replied her father. “That is what I told Jim this afternoon.”

Mr. Moore went to see his guest, and Mary nestled up to Sue.

“I am nearly scared to death.”

“The storm has got to come; we may as well have it over.”

Mr. Moore talked a few minutes, then decided to bring Martin to the object of his call. He drew out his watch and said: “I have got to go down town to-night. Did you want anything particular?”

“Yes.”

“I shall be happy to serve you.”

“I want to tell you that I love your daughter, and ask you to let her become my wife.”

Mr. Moore smiled. “She is already disposed of, Mr. Martin. As you are our pastor, I may confide in you to the extent of telling you that Sue is en-

gaged to Jim Hood. I am sorry that you did not know."

"It is not Miss Sue; it is Miss Mary that I want."

Elder Moore was dumb with amazement. When he regained his speech he exclaimed: "You are a confounded fool. Get out of the house!"

"Mr. Moore; I do not deserve this treatment. Miss Mary loves me, and"—

"You are a pair of confounded fools. I tell you to walk," interrupted the enraged father.

Paul walked, and found Sue waiting for him at the gate. "Did you speak to father about Mary?"

"Yes, I tried to, but he would not listen."

"Was he very angry?"

"He ordered me out of the house."

"Father has an awful temper, but Paul—may I call you Paul?"

"Yes, yes; I wish you would."

"I do not like to interfere, but I know that Mary loves you, and if you will have patience, and not lay father's outburst up against her, I think I can bring him around to see things in a different light."

"I will not lay it up against her."

"You are not disgusted with the whole family?"

"O no, indeed."

"You will keep coming here as usual?"

"No, no; I could not do that."

"I wish you would. However, I shall see you."

"Miss Sue, what has your father against me?"

“Nothing only that you are a preacher, with a small salary. You know yourself it would be hard to live on five hundred dollars a year.”

“I do not know much about the cost of living. Mr. Watson lived on my salary, and he had a family.”

“Yes, but they lived horrid. You and Mary would not want to live as they did.”

“Perhaps not.”

“If you were in business, you could make money; but of course you do not want to give up preaching. I should not like to have you do that myself. Never mind. We will see what can be done.”

Paul went home feeling more strongly than he had ever felt before that his life was a probation. He did not entertain a thought for a moment of giving up the work that he was called of God to do. Before he retired to rest he prayed for faith and patience: faith to believe that everything would work for his good, and patience to endure what might be in store for him.

Elder Moore was very angry when he returned to the dining room. “Mary, you ought to be locked up on bread and water until you learn a little sense. What did you send that fool to me for?”

“I did not send him.”

“I am glad to hear that. You would not have him if he wanted you to, would you?”

“Yes, I would if you would let me.”

“I will not let you. Bear that in mind. I do not

believe that you want him. Mother, you see that he keeps out of here from this on."

"What have you against him? You said the other day you were glad when I told you I thought he had a notion of Sue."

"We may as well have a fair and square understanding," said the head of the family, as he sat down in his favorite armchair. "I was opposed to Martin in the first place simply and solely because he was a single man, and I was afraid he would take a notion to some girl and somebody would have to suffer. When I thought he was after Sue, I was glad, because I knew she would not have him, and I did not suppose he would want more than one from the same family. I never thought of Mary."

"Father, do you not think a preacher ought to marry?" inquired Bell.

"If he wants to, but he ought to show some sense in selecting a wife."

"Our Mary is good enough for anybody, and he is good enough for her."

"He is good enough; I suppose he is. If she had been raised to pinch and save all her life, it might do. Just imagine her living like the Watsons! I should think you'd see yourselves that it is ridiculous."

Sue stood upon the threshold, and was just then seized with an inspiration. "Father, may I have a private interview with you in the parlor?" she inquired, half playfully, half seriously.

They retired to the parlor.

“Here, sit on the sofa; I want to sit beside you. Now, father, did Jim really ask you for me?”

“He really did.”

“What did you tell him?”

“I told you.”

“O, you didn’t tell him anything of the kind.”

“Do you want him?”

“Yes. Indeed I do.”

“Well, I do not know as I have any objection. Jim has no bad habits, and he is a good business man. He will be rich if he lives.”

“Then we have your consent?”

“Yes, if you want him.”

“Now, father, I want to talk about Mary and Mr. Martin.”

“That is another question.”

“I know it is, but we have to meet it. I am sorry they have taken a notion to each other, but worse things might happen her than to be a minister’s wife.”

“Not much.”

“O yes there might. A drunken husband would be worse. If you would let me manage, they would have their way and live respectably, and you would get a good deal of credit and not be out of pocket much either.”

Next to money Robert Moore liked to get *credit*, and his wily eldest daughter knew that better than he did.

“Let’s hear some of your management.”

“Make up your mind, in the first place, to make the best of a bad bargain. What would you have to pay for that brick house of Morgan’s on Chestnut Street, that is for sale?”

“It could be bought for fifteen hundred dollars.”

“It would make a good parsonage, and they could live as cheaply there as in any little tumble-down shanty in town. Now, you buy that and let them live there.”

“I can’t afford to buy a parsonage for the church.”

“Buy it for yourself. When Paul gets into the family I will put some ambition into his head. He will not always stay in Ashland. When he goes up higher you can sell it, and you will only be out the rent while they lived in it. I would not have him myself, but I rather like the idea of having a minister in the family. He can maintain the dignity, and Jim can make the money.”

Elder Moore whistled.

Sue followed up the advantage that she was shrewd enough to see that she had gained. “We do not expect to support the preacher, and it would be bad for the congregation if we did, but you could afford to let them have a house free of rent, and then we would not be ashamed of their home, and with no rent to pay they could live on his salary. Another thing, if you furnish the parsonage free of rent, you would not be expected to subscribe to everything that comes along as much as

you do now, so you would not be out much after all."

"I will see about it; I like Martin very well."

"Everybody likes him. They will be happy, and that will cover a multitude of sins, if poverty is a sin."

Moore yielded inch by inch. At last he said: "I do not like to be wrapped around your finger, but I will let you manage, since it seems to be your forte. If they want to be miserable for life, so be it."

"You must do one thing."

"What?"

"Apologize to Mr. Martin for the way you treated him to-night."

"I won't do it."

"Yes you will, and give him permission to come back."

"The dickens!"

A few days later Moore saw Martin passing his store, and went out. "See here, Martin! I was a little fast the other evening, I was taken so by surprise. I didn't mean all I said. We shall expect you to call as usual. Sue wanted me to tell you that she wants to see you."

"Thank you."

"You can stop when you are passing."

"All right."

There was a double wedding at Elder Moore's in September. Sue and Mary both wore white satin. Mary suggested something more service-

able for herself, but Sue said the white would color beautifully, and a black satin would be nice for a minister's wife, and would last a lifetime.

The Ashland congregation was pleased with the match, and rejoiced that the preacher for whom Elder Moore did not want to vote married his daughter. They raised his salary to six hundred dollars, and gave him a wedding present of a nice buggy. The first use made of it was to take Mary on a wedding trip to the old homestead in Pennsylvania. He had been gone nearly two years, and he and his lovely young wife were received with joy and rejoicing.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DONATION PARTY.

THE congregation at Ashland flourished under the administration of Martin. The parsonage was a nice, rather large brick house on Chestnut Street, and was owned by the father-in-law of the pastor.

The preacher had got into an ambitious, worldly family, and the congregation felt that they must do the fair thing by him, or he would be looking for broader fields. Rumors of "calls" from neighboring vacant churches, and from distant fields, reached them, but none had taken definite shape. Sometimes they feared that they would lose him in the near future, but he continued to serve them, and they decided to show their appreciation by a donation party.

A committee was appointed to see what the people were willing to give, and to notify those whose presents were too frequently duplicated that changes might be made. They were to have the party in the afternoon, for the convenience of the country people, and the family were notified, so that they would be at home.

Sue told Mary to prepare for a "visitation," and went to work with her usual energy to help.

"You will not be any richer when it is over; and if I can help it, you shall not be any poorer."

"I wish they would not have it. I do not want the house all mussed up."

"You cannot tell them so, but you can be chairman on the occasion, and lock up the rooms you hold sacred."

"That would be the whole house."

"You cannot do that."

"Cannot do what?" inquired Martin, coming into the dining room, where the plotters were at work.

"Lock up the house Thursday afternoon."

"Of course not. Why should we lock up? We shall be glad to see our friends."

"You do not want them all at once; the carpets will be ruined," replied Sue.

"I am uneasy about the supper," said Mary.

"I am afraid there will not be enough to eat."

"You cannot be expected to prepare supper for the whole congregation. Do not have any," suggested Martin.

"Brother Paul, they would ask for your resignation."

"They are not coming for something to eat."

"Some of them are not, and some of them are. Every one of them will expect a square meal, but they expect to get it up."

"It makes me nervous to think about it," said Mary.

"Do not get sick over it," advised Sue.

“If it proves to be unpleasant, we shall have to accept it as a part of our probation,” laughed Martin.

“If you will appoint me commander in chief, I will make it nice, and save your nerves, and it shall not break you up, any way,” promised Sue.

Sister Sue was an oracle in that establishment, and she was cordially given permission to manage the donation party as seemed wise in her own eyes. She issued her orders as if she were born Queen of Ashland, and had worn the purple all her life.

A wagon was sent to the schoolhouse, and all the benches and loose seats were taken and distributed around the parsonage front yard. Mrs. Hood thanked her stars that the spirit had moved the good people in the summer. An abundance of lumber was borrowed from a sawmill, and tables were put up in the large back yard, which was cool and shady. The house was put in perfect order, and no changes were made in any of the arrangements. The supper committee was given possession of the kitchen, and told to make themselves at home. The dining room was set apart as the receptacle for the donations. Baby Sue's crib was taken out on the porch just as it was on any other afternoon. Robert was dressed in his best clothes and told to be a good boy. The pastor put on his church coat, and his wife wore a new gingham.

Bell Moore took charge of the dining room, declaring she wanted a chance to steal the money.

Mr. and Mrs. Martin received their guests on the porch, where there were a few chairs. Elder Samuel West and family were the first arrivals, and were greeted kindly. "Will you go into the parlor, or would you rather stay out here?" inquired Mrs. Martin.

"O, stay out here. It's so much cooler."

That settled it.

"Where'll we take the things?" inquired the elder.

A young man whom Mrs. Hood had pressed into her service for such an emergency went with him and helped him unload. What was intended for the pastor was taken to the dining room, and what was designed for the supper was taken to the kitchen or cellar. Mr. West remembered that he was an elder, and that the elders ought to set a good example before the members. He brought a nice country-cured ham, a round of dried beef, and a keg of cider vinegar for the preacher, and his wife brought chicken, bread, and pies toward the supper.

In a short time Martin and the men were out in the yard, and it was not long until the women were there also, and it became a lawn party. Bonnets and hats were placed on a table on the porch that was not needed for anything else. Everybody was invited into the parlor, but no one wanted to go.

A boy approached driving a nice-looking cow. "Mr. Jim Hood couldn't come, but he sent you this cow, and said to tell you she's the best cow in Ashland County, and she's to belong to little Sue."

"Bring her right into the dining room," called out Bell, who had been watching for her arrival. A chorus of laughter greeted that order, which was modified and the cow was driven into the alley leading to the stable until a better arrangement could be made.

"Guess what I have brought?" said cheery Mrs. Sims, with whom Martin had boarded in his bachelor days.

"I have not the least idea," replied Mrs. Martin.

"I may as well tell, for you never will guess. Forlorn widow women, like me cannot afford flour and potatoes, so I went to work and made three big kettles of soap, two of soft, and one of hard, and I had the best luck I ever had, for you never saw better soap, and I made Mr. Morgan give me a brand new soap trough to put it in, and I watched for Robinson's wagon to get it over. Bell wanted them to put it in the dining room, but they are putting it in the cellar, while there are men here to help."

"I am much obliged to you. It will be very useful. I could not keep house without soap."

"I made a chicken pie, and baked some light cakes for supper. I thought I would tell you, for

I wanted you to know that I have done my share."

Mrs. Sims had a kind heart, and always did her share of every good work. She had told Martin that no one raised as extravagantly as the Moore girls were was fit for a preacher's wife, but she had no grudge against him because he had ignored the information.

"I have brought the little things." Mrs. Brown, the grocer's wife took a large basket from the boy who carried it for her, and placed the contents on the dining room table. They consisted of pepper, spice, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, soda, ginger, and a three-pound package of tea."

Elder Robinson brought a barrel of flour.

"I did not have a solitary thing to bring but dried fruit," apologized Mrs. Reed. "I had a notion not to come, but he said we would not be expected to give what we did not have."

"Certainly not, but dried fruit is nice, and very acceptable," replied Bell, as Mr. Reed entered with dried apples, peaches, pears, and a small package of currants and plums.

"I wonder what her father will give?"

"O, he is always giving them something. I do not expect he will give anything to-day. He gives them the house rent free."

"Yes, I know; but he is rich, he never misses it."

Elder Moore came just as supper was announced. "You are quite a lively party. I am glad

you are enjoying yourselves. Mary, I have not forgotten that you have a sweet tooth. I ordered a barrel of sugar, and it will be here in a few minutes."

Everybody had brought some dishes and some cutlery. All ate at once; there was no second table except for those who served at the first. The pastor asked a blessing. One glance at the loaded tables assured Mrs. Martin that her fears that there would not be enough to eat were groundless. She was a guest in her own home, for it was a congregational supper. The fragments were gathered up and placed in the cellar, for no one thought of taking anything home. Each woman hunted up her own dishes and put them into her own basket. It would be easy to wash them at home, and it saved time at the party. All gathered in the front yard. Young men and maidens sat on the grass. A few aged ones occupied the chairs on the porch. When it was almost time to go, the Bible was brought out, and the people sung:

"Behold how good a thing it is,
And how becoming well:
Together such as brethren are
In unity to dwell."

The pastor then read a chapter and offered prayer. The sun was sinking in the west when the people reluctantly prepared to go. One after another the wagons rattled away, and then the village folks asked for their bonnets. When the

last one was gone Mrs. Hood turned to her sister and her husband. "I vote that it was a success."

"Everything is a success, that you take in hand," said Martin gallantly.

"Everybody behaved beautifully. No damage was done, and the house is not even dirty."

"Nobody was in it, except the dining room and kitchen," replied Mary.

"Nobody wanted to come in. All they needed was a little managing. I'm glad it's over," said Sue as she sat down in a rocking chair for a little rest before starting to her own elegant home. Bell came out. "It was splendid! It will take you all forenoon to-morrow to put things away. Here is an inventory, I would advise you to learn it by heart, so that you will never hurt anybody's feelings by not knowing what every one brought."

Mary took the list. "Two quilts;" she exclaimed."

"Yes, and there is fifteen pounds of new feathers from Mrs. Matthews. They have just picked their geese. You can get a few more, and make another feather bed. You have been wanting another."

"It certainly paid," said Mr Martin. What made you all so afraid of it?"

"Let me tell you, my dear brother," replied Mrs. Hood, "this was no ordinary donation party."

"No, it was not," added Bell. "There is pie and chicken and cake enough in the cellar to last a month."

CHAPTER XVIII.

PROMOTED.

THE fame of the Rev. Paul Martin spread throughout all that region of country. The preacher at Urbana resigned his charge for a more important pastorate, and the congregation invited Martin to occupy their vacant pulpit for a Sabbath. He secured a substitute for his own work, and again he preached a trial sermon. It was not called by that name, but it was so regarded by all the parties concerned. He did not preach himself, but he preached the gospel, and it was to the credit of Urbana that they wanted him to succeed the one who had gone out from among them. Ashland understood when he went just what it meant, and they were not much frightened. He had broken for them the bread of life for seven years. They had raised his salary to six hundred dollars when he married, and were then paying him seven hundred, and his father-in-law furnished the parsonage, which was about the same as if done by the congregation. Furthermore, all his wife's people were there, her parents and both her sisters and their families. It was thought that she would not want to sunder all these ties and go off among strangers; and even if the salary should be a little larger, they would lose money by it.

Urbana undoubtedly broke the tenth commandment when she coveted her neighbor's pastor, but she knew there were plenty of other preachers quite good enough for Ashland, and she did not know any one that suited her quite as well as he did. The session met to take the preliminary steps toward securing a preacher, which meant Mr. Martin. There were other candidates in the field, and each had his friends. Some were without work and could be obtained cheaper than he, and some would probably require more. The session was unanimous for Martin, but they hardly knew how to proceed. The question of salary was of the utmost importance. They knew what he got in his present field, and he could not be expected to move, and above all to take his wife and three little ones away from all their folks without some compensation. It was finally decided to call a congregational meeting, and vote for a pastor, leaving the salary to be decided after it was definitely known who was the people's choice. This meeting was presided over by Elder Patterson. When nominations were in order Mr. Miller nominated the Rev. John Carroll.

"Any others?"

"The Rev. Paul Martin."

"Any others?"

"The Rev. Samuel Edwards."

"Any others?"

"The Rev. Joseph Duffy."

"Any others?"

“The Rev. James Hammond.”

“Any others?”

The silence was conclusive evidence that there was not. The conflict narrowed down until there were but two candidates in the field, Paul Martin and Samuel Edwards. The members stood up and were counted. The result was announced: the Rev. Samuel Edwards, sixty-seven; the Rev. Paul Martin, one hundred and twenty-one.

On motion, the vote was made unanimous, and then again arose the vexed question of salary. In accordance with an arrangement made at the meeting of the session, Elder Washburne was called on to make a statement. He told them all about the work at Ashland, and the amount of salary paid. He explained the domestic ties of the pastor elect in that place, and entreated the people to devise liberal things. They numbered almost two hundred members, and were able to pay, and ought to pay, enough to secure the man whom they had unanimously elected. He reminded them that it would not redound to their credit if they failed on account of the meager salary offered. Some of them almost wished they had voted for a less important personage, or at least a cheaper man; but having put their hands to the plow, they would not look backward. The salary was finally fixed at a thousand dollars, which was exceedingly liberal. A “call” was duly forwarded to Martin, and by him cordially accepted. The next Sabbath, after the singing of the last psalm, he

arose in his pulpit and said: "It becomes my painful duty to announce to you my resignation of this pastoral charge, to take place in one month. On four weeks from to-day I will preach my farewell sermon, and the Rev. Jesse Mills will preach the second sermon and declare the pulpit vacant."

As the people passed out it was evident that a thunderbolt had fallen among them.

The "call" had come and found them unprepared. They gathered together in excited groups, and discussed the situation. Various suggestions were made.

"Let's call a meeting."

"Let's raise his salary."

"We can pay as much as Urbana."

"It's not right to call a settled preacher. Why didn't they call some one that had no church? There are plenty of them."

Elders Robinson and Reed were informally appointed to confer with the pastor and see if anything could be done.

Martin received them kindly and listened to what they had to say. In reply he told them that it was not altogether a question of salary. There were many other considerations of very great importance. Among them was that of schools. His children must be educated, and, while the Ashland school would serve for the present, there would come a time when he would have to send them away to complete their education, and when that time came he might not have an opportunity to

move to any place so noted for the excellence of its schools. There were other social advantages greatly to be desired. It gave him a larger field of labor and increased his opportunities for usefulness. He regarded it as a call from the Lord, and dared not decline it.

They left feeling that their case was hopeless, but they did not blame him. No one blamed him, for they knew it was best for him and his family, and they conceded his right to accept his chances as they came to him, while they were sorry for themselves and indignant at Urbana. He preached his farewell sermon in the golden month of October, to the largest audience he had ever addressed. He reviewed his life in his study. He had spent about a year in the missionary work, and seven in that pastorate.

It was only eight years since he had that terrible fever and had thought that life was not worth living. During these years he had eaten that bread which comes down from heaven, and drank freely of the water of life. He was blessed with a worthy wife, three lovely little ones, Robert, Sue, and Tom. His feeling was of deep thankfulness as he selected his text from the thirteenth chapter of Second Corinthians: "Finally, brethren; farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."

It was preached, as was the custom when so many people were present, in the woods. No

church in Ashland County would have held the congregation. The grove selected for the occasion was just a little way out of town, and was the one used for picnics and Fourth of July orations.

Martin did his best, and his effort was a decided success. There were present some who had never heard him before, and such wondered that his people could let him go. He talked separately to the session, to the old, to the middle-aged, and to the young. He preached Jesus to all of them, and there was hardly a dry eye in that vast concourse of people when his voice trembled with his last pastoral words: "Finally, brethren, farewell."

Like all Psalm-singing people in their trouble, they fell back upon the twenty-third Psalm, and made the grove ring with melody as they concluded the service with singing:

"The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want.
He makes me down to lie
In pastures green, he leadeth me
The quiet waters by."

After the usual intermission the Rev. Jesse Mills preached in the same place, and at the conclusion of the services he declared the pulpit of the Presbyterian Church vacant.

To move from Ashland to Urbana was quite an undertaking. They began their preparations with a public sale, as suggested by Mrs. Hood. Everybody was there without regard to Church affinities, and all wanted something that had belonged

to the Martins. All the heavy furniture was disposed of at a fair price, most of it being bought by those who felt that it would add to their dignity to own the preacher's furniture. There was not the financial sacrifice that usually accompanies a move, that necessitates disposing of personal property. Even the rolling-pin and nutmeg grater were put up in obedience to a demand for more, and were bought to be sacredly preserved as mementos. As soon as it was known that they were going, Elder Moore met with a purchaser for the parsonage, and, as he had no further use for it, he sold it. Mary and the children were left with her mother while her husband and father went to the new field. It was considered best for Martin to go on in advance of his family, and return for them when he had secured a suitable home. Moore proposed to go with him, telling him that he wanted to see the country and the heathen among whom his future lot was to be cast. They went in the buggy, and the china and silver, beds and books, and such things as they would not sell, were taken in a wagon drawn by strong horses. They arrived on Saturday evening, and the recently elected pastor preached his first sermon to his parishioners the next morning from the words: "There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

His reception was kind, but there was less demonstration than among the country people of his late work. If he doubted the wisdom of his deci-

sion, he kept his doubts to himself. Early in the week the session and leading members were consulted about a parsonage, and they were delighted when they found that Moore wanted to buy a home for his children. He was treated with great respect, as he deserved to be, for he was the father-in-law of the minister, and besides that he was one of the wealthiest and most influential citizens of Ashland, and had a little money to invest in Urbana. The people entertained him gladly in their homes and helped him in hunting up a suitable place, which was soon found. The house was a plain, unpretending brick, not very different from the one they had left. It had a substantial foundation, and there was a large yard with trees, and a garden, and a stable with carriage house attached. The purchaser looked well to the title, and, finding that it was unquestioned, the price was agreed upon and the deed was made out to "Mrs. Mary Martin, during the term of her natural life, and at her death to become the property of her children, or their heirs forever."

He had the deed recorded in the proper office, and a place was found for the family who were living in the house. They kindly vacated the premises at once, a month's rent being paid for them in their new home in return for their willingness to oblige the new owner.

Workmen were immediately put to work, and paint and paper accomplished such wonders that the neighbors hardly knew the place. When

the work was well under way, Elder Little was authorized to supervise the remainder; and if more money was needed, bills were to be presented to Martin on his return. That gentleman knew, when he had chosen this place in consultation, that Father Moore intended to buy the property decided upon, but he supposed it would be like the parsonage in Ashland, in his own name. He understood that he was to pay the taxes, and keep it in repair, as he had done that. They both returned to Ashland well pleased with the investment. The father was glad that his daughter could not put herself out of a home, and the husband was glad of his increased facilities for doing his work, and the greater advantages the change would afford his wife and children. They reached home on Thursday. While they had been gone the minister's family had been the honored guests of the community. Martin did not want to preach on Sabbath, for he had said farewell. They started early on Saturday morning, and went that day to Wooster, where they had friends whom they wanted to see. They stayed until Monday, and then started in earnest.

Mr. Jim Hood bought a new carriage while Father Moore and Martin were in Urbana, and as the one he already had was the best in the neighborhood, he was supposed to be putting on a good deal of style even for a rich man, when he made that purchase, but when it was known that he had traded his "good enough for anybody" carriage

to Martin for his one-horse buggy, without boot, he was pronounced the cleverest man in Ashland.

The journey was made by easy stages. Robert occupied the front seat with his father. Mrs. Martin, Sue, and baby Tom occupied the back seat. They drove into Urbana and stopped by invitation at the hospitable home of Elder Little, who went down the walk and met them in person. After supper Mrs. Martin wanted to go and see her future home, but was persuaded to wait until morning. That was prayer meeting night, and the pastor's arrival was announced by his presence. In the morning Mr. Little told the preacher's wife that the key of the parsonage was missing, but that he would hunt it up and come back for her. Just then a messenger came with an urgent call for the preacher to go a mile into the country. They told him he had better drive out and see the sick man, and take his wife and baby, and he could return by Elder Little's and get the key.

Mrs. Martin had driven enough for that week; but the plan was laid down for her, and she saw no means of escape, and reluctantly consented to obey. When they reached the place they were surprised to find that Mr. Meloy was only slightly indisposed. He was sitting on the porch, and the family were evidently expecting them. Mrs. Martin declined the invitation to take off her wrap.

"O, you must! You are going to stay to dinner."

"We cannot stay to-day. We will come some other time."

“Never put off until to-morrow what can be done to-day,” quoted the invalid.

“We have got the chicken killed,” volunteered one of the children.

A warning glance from the lady of the house prevented further revelations. It seemed strange to Mrs. Martin that she should be expected to visit that day, when she was so anxious to get into her own home. Dinner was very late for the country, it being after one o'clock when they rose from the table. Mrs. Martin spoke to her husband in an aside: “Let us go now.”

“As soon as we can.”

As soon as they dared they proposed returning to town, and found that the boys had turned the horses loose in the lower meadow. It took time to get them ready, so that it was two o'clock when they drew up at Elder Little's gate.

“You hold the horses, and I will get the key. We will not stop,” said Martin.

A servant went to the door and gave him the key, and told him there was no one at home except herself. When again in the carriage Martin drove off at a rapid rate in the direction of the parsonage.

“I do not expect them to stay at home for us,” said Mrs. Martin; “but it seems strange. I suppose they will take care of the children if they took them with them. I wish we were at home.”

“This is the place.”

“ O, it is so nice and quiet-looking.”

“ Yes, I think you will like it.”

Mrs. Little ran down the walk to meet them. “ Let me hold the baby while you get out. You stayed so long, I came over to see if you had come the other road.”

“ I thought we never would get here.”

“ You are here now, and you will likely have long enough to stay. Just come right in and make yourself at home.”

As she entered the gate the truth dawned upon her. It was a surprise party, and they had been sent to the country to get them out of the way while the preparations were being made. In a few minutes the Meloy family put in an appearance, and that gentleman took pleasure in telling what a time they had holding their guests, and told Mrs. Martin that he was preparing a place to hide the baby when she yielded to milder persuasions. It was known that the minister had moved a long distance, and had not been able to take much of his household goods. Every one who went to the surprise was expected to leave a substantial token behind. A great many things were taken that cost a trifle in detail, but a good deal in the aggregate. Pans and kettles and tinware abounded. The house was as clean as it could be made. Good taste had selected and put up shades before all the windows. A bedstead had been put up in the room which it was supposed Mrs. Martin would use for her own, and a feather bed which

prying eyes had discovered in a box was airing so that it could be used that night if wanted. A rocking-chair for the mother and a crib for the baby were on hand.

There was no supper, simply a reception. The family received many invitations to spend the night, but they preferred staying in their new home, and as soon as that was known the people took their departure, that they might enjoy the rest they so much needed. An abundance of cooked food was sent in, and Robert and Sue were taken away and brought back the next day.

The Presbytery to which he was transferred convened in his church, and duly installed the Rev. Paul Martin as pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Urbana.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE UNWELCOME GUEST.

MARTIN was thirty-five years old when he entered upon his pastorate at Urbana. The first ten years were fraught with many changes. Railroads were built and the telegraph was put to practical use. Progress became the watchword of the times, and Martin and his congregation kept pace with the rest of mankind. They introduced the use of hymns into the worship of the sanctuary, and soon after the organ. There were many who regarded these innovations with distrust, but they were approved by the General Assembly, and adopted by the other churches of their denomination, and Urbana could not afford to be behind the times. Even some of the elders drew the line at the choir, but a few good singers sat together to lead in the singing, and those singers had to have a name as a matter of convenience, and soon they were called the "choir" by common consent, because no better name was suggested. The congregation was in a flourishing condition.

Other Presbyterian churches had been built in the country, and some of the farmers had found places in those, but the membership had increased notwithstanding that depletion of their ranks.

Three more children had been added to the family in the parsonage, which made six, that were growing up as olive branches round about the table. They promised a larger salary when they called Martin than any other preacher was getting in that vicinity, and as much as they had been able to pay. Consequently it had not been raised.

One lovely May morning Robert came in with the mail. "A letter from Aunt Sue," and he tossed the missive into his mother's lap, to whom it was addressed. As she read a look of sadness crept into her usually placid face.

"Anything the matter?" inquired her husband.

"Yes, father is sick."

"Seriously?"

"I am afraid so," as she handed him the letter. During the sixteen years of their married life they had been visited with affliction. Martin had been called to Pennsylvania, and had seen the light go out of his childhood's home in the death of his precious mother. Mrs. Hood had been called to give into the Savior's arms two of her children, while they were less than a year old. Bell had parted with her only son, a golden-haired boy of four summers.

The death angel had never entered the parsonage, and none of the inmates had ever been dangerously sick. When Martin finished reading the letter he handed it back to his wife. "You must go at once."

“How can we?”

“It must be accomplished, if you feel able for the journey.”

“Yes, I am able to go; I want to go, if I can,” and she burst into tears.

There was no rail communication between Urbana and Ashland, hence they would have to go in the carriage. Hurried arrangements were made. Robert was left at Elder Little's and was to take an oversight of the parsonage. He was then fifteen years of age and could be trusted. Sue and Tom were left at Elder Patterson's and were given permission to spend part of the time in the country at Mr. Meloy's. The three youngest children, Bell, Jim, and Phebe, who was only two years old, and was still considered the baby, were taken along. Kind neighbors and an efficient servant lent willing hands and rendered valuable help in the hasty preparations for the unexpected departure, so that in two hours from the time they received the tidings bidding them hasten to the bedside of the stricken father they were on the way. They drove into Ashland at twilight, and hurried the tired horses up to the old home. They had heard on the road the day before that there was no hope of the recovery of the loved one. Fred Cresap, Bell's husband, saw them coming, and waited at the gate to receive them.

“How is he?” inquired Martin.

“About the same.”

There was relief in those words. The long,

tiresome journey had not been made in vain, since the father was still living. He had been stricken with paralysis, and was perfectly helpless, not being able to move hand or foot. His organs of speech were only partially affected, and he could speak a few words occasionally. When Mrs. Martin was taken into his room, he evidently recognized her.

She controlled her emotion, and as she took a chair by his bedside she said gently: "My dear father."

He looked lovingly at her, and with what seemed to be a great effort replied: "My dear Mary."

Martin went in a few moments later, and stood by the bed. "Father."

There was no reply, but soon the sick man glanced all around the room as if looking for something.

"Father, do you want anything?" inquired Mrs. Hood, who was chief nurse and never left the house.

Very feebly came the response: "Mary's baby."

The three children were brought in, and Phebe was placed on his bed where he could see her. He smiled at the child but did not speak, and soon the children were sent out and Martin and his wife went to the room set apart for their use.

Elder Moore slept better that night than he had done since he was stricken with that disease which strikes terror to the heart of every victim. It was noticed the next morning that he moved the fingers

of his right hand, as if trying what he could do, and also that he could move his head slightly. He was a little better. They all noticed that he kept his eyes fixed upon Mary, and they supposed that he comprehended that she had been sent for, and had just arrived. The rest of the family had been with him throughout his sickness. Presently he spoke. "Where's Martin?"

"Here I am, father."

"I want to see you."

They all waited, while Martin stood beside the bed to hear what he had to say. Again he glanced at Mary and seemed to forget or else he could not talk. He closed his eyes, and did not speak again for some time. He grew weaker, and it became evident that he could not last many days. Soon his time was counted by hours. "Martin!"

"I am right here, father."

Mary went up to the bed, and he looked at the door, and then at her. There could be no mistake: he wanted her to leave the room. Wonderingly she went out.

"Is she bad?" inquired Moore.

"She is not sick," replied Martin.

"Mary is sick," affirmed the father.

They all looked at each other, and thought his mind must be wandering, although that was the first evidence they had seen of it. Mrs. Hood attempted to explain. "Father, you are very sick. and we sent for Sister Mary to come and see you. She has been here two days, but she is not sick."

“She looks bad.”

“She is tired after her long journey, and she is very anxious about you.”

“Martin!”

“Father!”

“Take care of her.”

“Yes, father.”

“Martin!”

“Father!”

“Take care of Mary.”

“Yes, father.”

“Sue!”

“What, father?”

“Help Martin.”

“Yes, father.”

He closed his eyes as if perfectly satisfied, and did not speak again that day. The next day he sunk rapidly, and when night closed it was easily seen that he could not last until morning. His aged wife, who had walked hand in hand with him for forty-six years, was drinking the cup, which her Father was giving her, with all the heroism of Christian womanhood, realizing even then all the agonies of widowhood. His three daughters and their husbands waited with her in the chamber of death. The family physician was also present, and a friend or two who might be needed. The dying man seemed to understand.

“Doctor.”

The physician was at his side in a moment.

“Am I dying?”

“I fear you are.”

“Are you ready? Have you any fears?” inquired Martin.

“O no, none at all; I am ready.” Another silence.

His faithful wife bowed her head upon his bed.

“Don’t cry, mother. A little while.” As he spoke he raised his palsied hand, and laid it upon her head. A few more breaths, and Elder Moore had gone to his rest. He was mourned by the whole community, for a sincere Christian and a faithful friend had been suddenly taken from among them, and all felt a sense of personal loss. The bereaved family were not loud in the expression of their grief, but bowed in submission to the stroke, and not one of them, not even the aged widow, would have had him back. He had gone to the everlasting reward of an honorable, upright life, and his loved ones left behind were not selfish enough to want his earthly life and sufferings prolonged. Hard though it was to give him up, resignation was stamped upon their souls, and the language of their hearts was: “It is well.” He died on Friday night, and according to the custom of the neighborhood the Sabbath would have been the proper day for the burial. Saturday would have been considered too soon, and Monday too long to wait. The weather was cool for May, and they set the time for nine o’clock on Monday morning. The funeral was announced on Sabbath in all the churches in the village, and at the appointed hour a large company

assembled to do honor to his memory. The services were conducted by his pastor, who likened the departed to a shock of wheat gathered into the garner when fully ripe. A large procession followed him to his last resting place in the churchyard at Ashland, the village in which his long, busy, useful life had been spent. On that Monday morning Mrs. Martin arose feeling very bad. Her husband entered the room just as she finished dressing. "Breakfast is waiting."

"Tell them not to wait. I do not want any."

"You must eat something, dear; you cannot keep up unless you do."

"I cannot keep up any way; I feel so bad."

"Yes, I know. We cannot expect anything else. I do not know how to comfort you. You must bear it the best you can. Come down to the dining room now."

They went down, and breakfast was eaten in silence. No one did more than make a pretense at eating. When they reached home after the funeral, Mrs. Martin went directly to her room, and it was thought best not to disturb her. A couple of hours later six-year-old Bell went downstairs.

"Where is papa?"

"He is around somewhere. What do you want?"

"I want him to go for the doctor. My mamma is sick."

Mrs. Hood hurried to her sister's room. "Why, Mary! are you sick?"

“Yes.”

“Why did you not tell us?”

“I did tell Paul this morning, but he did not understand.”

“What is the matter with you?”

“I do not know.”

Mrs. Hood felt her pulse, and laid her hand on the throbbing brow. “You are all worn out.”

“So are you all worn out, but you are not down sick. I am afraid I am going to make you trouble.”

“If you are going to talk that way, I will think you have got the typhoid fever and are out of your head,” replied Mrs. Hood as she made an unsuccessful effort to force a laugh.

Martin came in. “Why, Mary! are you sick?”

“Yes.”

Mrs. Hood and Martin looked at each other. Mary sat up in the bed. “I want to tell you two that I am nearly worried to death. What makes you keep that secret from me?”

“What secret?”

“You know as well as I do, both of you; and you will not tell me, and you know it is killing me.”

“I will tell you anything you want to know, dear,” said her husband.

“So will I,” added her sister.

“What did father say about me when he sent me out of the room? What did he want?”

They were startled, for it all came back to them in an instant. They could not tell her just then

that he thought she was sick, and had exacted a promise from both of them to take care of her.

“He could not talk much, you know. He never said but a word or two at a time,” replied her sister.

“What did he want?”

“As near as I could make out, he thought you were tired with your journey, and needed rest, for he spoke to Paul, and he said: ‘Take care of her.’”

“Was that all?”

“Yes.”

“Nothing else?”

“No, dear. What else could there be?”

“I do not know. That is what is troubling me. He did not need to send me out to say that.”

“Of course not. You do not know that he sent you out. He said nothing that you might not have heard. It may be that he wanted to see Phebe, and was trying to motion you to go and get her. You know he asked for her the evening you came.”

“Then why did you not tell me?”

“I do not know that he wanted anything. There was certainly nothing to tell.”

“Paul!”

“What is it, dear?”

“Father did not say I was going to die, or anything?”

“Why, no. What put such things into your head?”

“Nothing, I suppose; only I am sick, and I have worried so, because I thought he had told you something that you would not tell me. I have not been feeling well for a good while, and the excitement and the trip were too much for me. I thought he might have noticed it. Sick people do notice things.” She laid back on the pillow.

“Yes, they do; and I think that father did notice that she was tired and was not looking well,” replied Sue, looking straight at Martin, “and that is what he meant when he said, ‘Take care of her.’”

“I expect it was,” he replied promptly.

Mary felt better, for she had indulged a vague sort of feeling that her father had said something about her that had been withheld from her.

“Hadn’t I better call the doctor?” asked Martin.

“O no; I feel better. I need rest more than medicine.”

Martin and Mrs. Hood consulted together in the dining room an hour later, and decided to wait until the next day before summoning medical aid. Mrs. Martin was up the next morning as usual, and went down to breakfast with a tired look on her face.

“Are you rested?” inquired Mrs. Hood.

“I do not think I am.”

Mrs. Moore was not able to leave her room. She was not exactly sick, but was worn out and overwhelmed with grief. Mrs. Martin went in to see her. “How do you feel this morning, mother?”

“I am feeling better, as well as I could expect. You look tired. Are you feeling well?”

“I am not very well, but not sick enough to stay in bed; I am all used up.”

“You need rest.”

“Yes, that is what I need.”

They all rested a few days, when the children agreed that some plans for the future must be made. Mrs. Hood and Mrs. Cresap both felt that they must return to their own homes. Mrs. Hood had a large house and four children to care for, and, although Mrs. Cresap had a smaller establishment, her husband and her two little girls needed her.

The mother could not live on alone in the old homestead with no other company than her servant. She said nothing about it, for she did not seem to think.

Mr. and Mrs. Hood, Mr. and Mrs. Cresap, and Martin gathered in the parlor and discussed the situation. They thought it best that nothing should be said to their mother about living with her children as long as Mrs. Martin remained. Any or all of them would be glad to have her. They all looked to Mrs. Hood for counsel, and she suggested that Martin leave Mary and the children for the present, and return to his work, and he could come for them, or Mr. Cresap would take them home.

Martin did not exactly like the plan, but he could think of nothing better, and the next morning he approached his wife on the subject. “Mary, what about going home?”

"I do not know. We must go. I suppose we ought to go right away."

"Sue and Bell want me to leave you for a visit. You are not feeling well, and when you get stronger I will come back for you. How would that suit you?"

"It would be nice. I should like to stay, but we should make them trouble here, and it will be so much trouble for you to come back, it is such a long trip."

"I shall not mind that. Sue and I were talking about mother. She cannot live here alone, with nobody but Eliza, and it will be hard for her to leave the old home; and if you are willing to stay awhile, they will all be glad, and she may see for herself that some change must be made."

"What will she do?"

"We do not know yet. She will probably live with Sue or Bell."

"I wish she could live with us."

"I should be glad, but I should not advise it, for I do not think it a good plan for old people to change their surroundings more than can be helped. She knows no one in Urbana, and she would be homesick and unhappy."

"Yes, she would. I will stay with her awhile."

Before Martin left, the attorney was called to read Elder Moore's will to the family, and, as was expected, it was a fair, manly document. He provided generously for his wife, and in the end his property was to be divided equally among his

three daughters. It was expressly stated that what had been given to Mary was a *gift*, and was not to be deducted from her share of the estate. All his property except the homestead was to be sold within six months after his death, that his family might use the money if they desired.

“What does that mean about Mary?” inquired Bell.

“It must mean the rent of the parsonage,” replied Martin.

“We all knew he gave her that.”

“I was under the impression that he had given her some real estate,” explained the attorney.

They all remembered his concern for her at the last.

“I think he intended to, but perhaps had not done it,” suggested Sue.

“I am quite positive he told me he had,” persisted the attorney, who had always attended to dead man’s business.

He gave a copy of the will to Hood, and another to Martin, they having been named executors, and took his departure. Martin looked it over. “According to this we have to sell the parsonage.”

“You can buy it,” replied Hood. “It will not amount to anything like Mary’s share of the estate, and she can have the house, if she prefers it to the money.”

“I certainly do,” spoke up Mary for the first time.

Martin left his wife with many misgivings, and returned to his home and his work with a heavy heart. It did not seem reasonable that her father's death should have affected her so much more than it had either of her sisters, and he feared for her health. He was directed by the other heirs to put the parsonage up at a public sale and buy it for his wife. In obedience to those instructions he advertised it, and a day or two after he met Elder Patterson.

"What do you mean by advertising your house?"

"Father Moore's will requires that all his real estate be sold, except the home. We expect to buy it if it does not go too high."

"You cannot make a deed."

"Why not?"

"I remember now, Moore did not want you to know. Go down to the Recorder's office and examine the title. Who has the deed?"

"I do not know. I did not see it among father's papers."

"You can find out something about it at the Recorder's office."

Martin went to the courthouse. He did not know the property by number of lot and block, and he did not have a tax receipt with him. They looked in the index, and the name "Robert Moore" was not on record.

"Look at the Martins," suggested the Recorder, who was busy with other work.

The clerk found "Mrs. Mary Martin and children."

"Look that up."

They did so, and carefully pinned to the page, where recorded, was the original deed in a large envelope, and marked: "Robert Moore. To be taken care of until called for." The present incumbent of the office knew nothing about it, but he was sure it must be all right, and a little investigation proved that it was. Moore had left the deed with Elder Little, and that gentleman had placed it in the office for safe-keeping. The instrument was delivered to Martin.

Hood and Cresap were both in business, with many chances of making money, while Mary's husband had nothing but his salary, and his profession forbade his giving his time or his talent to the accumulation of property. They were all glad when he sent them a certified copy of the record, and asked what he should do. There was nothing that could be done but to withdraw the advertisement and insert in its place a four-line statement that there had been a mistake in regard to the proposed sale.

Mrs. Martin did not regain strength, and Mrs. Hood consulted the family physician about her. He thought there was no occasion for alarm, but advised a tonic, something to build her up, and gave her a preparation of iron. As the weather became warmer she began to cough. "I must have taken cold," she said.

If it was a cold, it did not yield to the simple remedies that were used for the purpose of breaking it up. She began to get homesick, and told Sue one evening that something must be done about their mother, for she must surely write for Paul to come for her. It had never entered her head that she was staying for anything except to care for her mother.

"I am going to send Dr. Wilson up to take that cough in hand before you go," replied Mrs. Hood.

The doctor called the next day and made a thorough examination and left some medicines. He went directly to Hood's. "What is the matter with Mrs. Martin?"

"That is what I wanted you for. Have you seen her?"

"Yes."

"What is the matter with her?"

"She is all run down. She does not seem to have any constitution. I do not think she has any particular disease."

"Is she in any danger?"

"How old is she?"

"She is forty."

"How many children has she?"

"Six."

"Are they all here?"

"No; three are here. She wants to go home."

He shook his head.

"Is she able to go?"

“O yes, but it would probably be hard on her, and perhaps it would not be best.”

“I am not sure that I understand you.”

“If she should get down sick, you could not be with her as you can if she stays here, and her mother could not see her at all.”

“Then you think she is going to be down?”

“I am afraid so.”

“I do not know what to do.”

“I should write for her husband and the rest of the children to come on, and all be here together, if I were in your place.”

Mrs. Hood rose and stood before him. She grasped his arm. “Is she going to die?”

“Not now. Careful nursing may do much, but I do not think she will live a year. She has given her whole life to her husband and her children, and now let him resign his charge and do what can be done for her, while she needs it.”

The doctor left, and Mrs. Hood sat down to think. She sent for Bell and her husband to come and take supper with her, as she wanted to see them on important business. They looked the matter calmly in the face. They had all been uneasy about her, and while they did not give her up, and conclude that she must die, they knew that she was in a very critical condition.

Mrs. Hood wrote to her brother-in-law and told him some of the facts and advised him to resign his work and bring the children home and live with their mother until his wife's health was restored.

Martin wrote his resignation in a few lines and left it with Elder Little, with the key of his house. Some boxes were packed with clothing and sent to Ashland. He and the children went in the carriage. Mrs. Martin was told that her husband needed a vacation, and since her mother could not live alone, she was asked as a great favor to spend the summer there. Her objections were overruled and she consented, and did not seem very much surprised when told that Paul had been written to and might come along any day. She was glad when they did come and the family were all together again.

An esteemed unmarried middle-aged cousin was induced to go and take charge of the housekeeping, and the wheels of the domestic machinery moved smoothly. Mary went out occasionally, and some days she seemed almost well, but her cough grew worse as winter came on. The doctor asked them to call another physician in consultation, and when the specialist came it was made his duty to communicate the result to the distressed family. The lady had consumption, but might last until spring. There was no appeal. They did not tell her, but she seemed to realize it. In February she ceased to leave her room, and when the blustering March winds came she shivered with every blast, and did not leave her bed. She lingered all through April, ministered to with loving hands, and every want anticipated. On the first day of May she told Paul and Sue that they

must take her place in the care of the children, and, having received their promise, she closed her eyes and fell asleep in Jesus.

Martin met the death of his beloved wife with a Christian fortitude that could hardly have been expected of him. He bowed beneath the chastening rod, and stood at the open grave with his six motherless children, his will in complete submission to that of his Heavenly Father. They buried her beside the parent, who had preceded her less than a year to the celestial mansion prepared for them. She had been Martin's wife seventeen years, and now that she was gone he must again take up his work.

He proposed to move his family to Urbana, and to live in their own house until he found an open field. Mother Moore was too old to take the care of six motherless children, and no one thought of placing the burden upon her shoulders. She herself suggested the propriety of her living with Sue, and the suggestion was received with delight by all the family. When Martin reached his home he was surprised to find that the session of his church had been in constant correspondence with his friends, and that the consideration of his resignation had been indefinitely postponed. He was still their pastor, and his return was hailed with joy, mingled with sadness and grief for the greatly beloved helpmeet left behind in the Ashland churchyard.

CHAPTER XX.

HOUSEKEEPERS.

MARTIN'S family consisted of himself and his six children. Robert, the eldest, was sixteen years old when his mother died; and Phebe, the youngest, was three. The vexed servant question became a problem of no easy solution with him. Sue, the eldest daughter, was fourteen. She needed a mother's care as much as Phebe did. The maiden who had done the cooking before they left Urbana had gone to preside over a household of her own. It was harder to find a girl to suit them than it had been to find a house when they went to the place ten years before. No one that could be had to do the work could be expected to take proper care of the children. A housekeeper was a necessity. Mrs. Jones, a middle-aged widow, after much persuasion, consented to act in that capacity. She was a good housekeeper and an excellent manager; and if she could have put old heads on young shoulders, all might have gone well. She never had any children of her own, and she did not understand them. When Martin had furnished her with funds for meeting the expenses, and had given her the entire charge, he considered that his responsibility ended. He did not expect his housekeeper to be a mother to

his children, for no one could take her place, but he did expect Mrs. Jones to watch over them and train them according to the best of her ability, and she understood it so. She was a conscientious woman, and spared neither time nor trouble in her efforts to perform what she considered her duty. She was poor and always had been, but she was industrious and frugal, and she was appalled at the indolence and extravagance at the parsonage. The children were told to obey her, but they needed line upon line and precept upon precept in that direction.

“Miss Sue, you had better not wear that dress; it is raining, and you will get it spoiled,” said Mrs. Jones one morning as Sue was starting out.

Sue glanced at the clouds. “It is not going to rain much. I hate to change, and I am only going to the corner.”

She went on, and returned in a couple of hours. The dress was not injured, and Sue congratulated herself that she knew pretty well how to dress, and concluded that Mrs. Jones was rather fussy, and did not know much about clothes any way, while the housekeeper mentally resolved that she would not stay there if Miss Sue continued to set such a bad example before the younger children. One morning she saw Tom throwing up his ball in the front yard. “Tom, do not play with your ball right there in the yard.”

“What is the reason? I have always played in the yard.”

"You will break the glass in some of the windows."

"I never broke any yet; and if I do, you will not have to pay for it."

He went on playing, not intending to be rude; but he simply thought that she was borrowing unnecessary trouble, and that there was no danger of breaking the glass, and he told the truth when he said he was accustomed to playing there. He did not think of his disobedience, while Mrs. Jones thought of nothing else.

"Bell, do not take that cake."

"I am hungry; I want something to eat."

"Take some bread and butter."

"I do not like bread and butter."

"Then take bread and jelly."

"I do not like bread and jelly."

"I do not like so much eating between meals. If you are hungry, you can eat bread."

"I do not want bread. May I have the cake?"

Mrs. Jones was silent, and Bell construed the silence into an affirmative, and went out of the dining room openly eating the cake.

Sue went into the sitting room one afternoon with her mind intent on business. "Mrs. Jones, I need a new dress, and I should like to have it right away."

"You must ask your father about that."

"We never asked him about our clothes. Mother always got them for us."

"She is gone now."

“Yes, I know that; but if you tell papa I need it, he will give you the money to get it.”

“You do not need it.”

“I have only got two that I can wear out of the house.”

“That is enough when you are wearing black.”

“No, it is not. Jennie Brown has four, and she is wearing black.”

“There is more money thrown away about this house than would keep many a family; but if your papa is willing, I do not care. I suppose you think it does not come off me.”

“Will you ask him?”

“No, I will not; you must ask him yourself.”

“Then he will send me to you.”

“If he does, I will not oppose it.”

Sue got her new dress and was happy; and then Bell wanted a new dress, and she got it; and Phebe wanted a new “dess,” and she got it; and it was not long until they all got about what they wanted, and each did that which was right in his own eyes. Martin moved along, unconscious that all was not serene and just as it ought to be, while Mrs. Jones was nearly frantic. She consulted Mrs. Little. “They just take the house. I cannot do a thing with them. I never saw such a set of young ones in my life.”

“You ought to consult their father.”

“He does not seem to care what they do, so they keep out of his way.”

“His mind is on his work.”

“His work ought to be to bring up his motherless children in the way they should go.”

“He does not notice them.”

“He ought to notice them.”

“I do not see what I can do.”

“You can hunt up somebody to take my place.”

“You must not leave them. They cannot get along without you.”

“I cannot stand it. If Sue was worth a cent, she would take hold and make the little ones mind, but she is the worst of the lot.”

“Do not be in a hurry. I will see Mr. Martin.”

Mrs. Little invited the pastor to supper, and after the meal was over she sent him into the parlor, and soon followed. “Mr. Martin, I do not want to interfere with your domestic affairs, but I promised Mrs. Jones to speak to you.”

“What about?”

“About the children. You know she never had any of her own, and she has never been used to them, and she cannot manage them.”

“She does very well.”

“I know she does the best she can, but she is tired and wants you to get some one to take her place and let her go home.”

“Whom can we get?”

Mrs. Little wanted to shake the man. “You cannot get anybody that will do as well as she does.”

“I dare say not; but if she wants to go, we will have to have some one.”

“It would be better if you could persuade her to stay; she is not needed at home, and you will find it hard to get any one to take her place.”

“I will speak to her. Is she satisfied with her pay?”

“O yes, I think so; the children seem to be the trouble, and it might be well if you could spare them a little more of your time. They were no doubt spoiled a good deal at their grandmother’s while your wife was sick, and they do not understand the necessity of obeying Mrs. Jones.”

“O yes they do; you are mistaken there. I told them at the start that they must obey her.”

“Children have to be told again and again, and perhaps Mrs. Jones was not careful enough at first to exact obedience.”

“I do not know. I have always wanted them to obey her; and if they have not, I have not known it.”

Mr. Martin spoke to Mrs. Jones at the breakfast table. “Mrs. Little tells me that you have had trouble with the children. I am sorry about it. Do they not obey you?”

“We do not get along well together, and I think you had better get some one to take my place.”

“I do not know whom to get. Children, you must remember that I told you to obey Mrs. Jones.”

“We every one of us do just as we please,” replied Jim with evident pride.

“Why, Jim!”

“We do. * You can ask Sue. She cannot do a thing with one of us, unless it is Phebe.”

“I am astonished!”

“It is about the state of affairs,” said Mrs. Jones; and the subject was dropped for that time.

A little later Mr. Martin called Sue to his study. “What is the matter with Mrs. Jones?”

“Nothing, only she is old, and she expects us to be fifty or sixty. She does not want us to play, or go anywhere, or have any company, or enjoy ourselves at all.”

“Do you obey her?”

“No, we do not. She would like to have me sew carpet rags or piece quilts all the time I am out of school.”

“You ought to acquire industrious habits.”

“I do not like to sew.”

“How old are you?”

“I am fifteen. Why, papa! do you not know my age?”

“Yes, but I did not think. You will soon be able to take charge of the house, and I wish we could keep Mrs. Jones a little longer.”

“We cannot, for she asked me to tell you that she is very anxious to get away; but she will stay this week, until we can get some one else.”

“Why will she not stay indefinitely?”

“She does not like us children.”

“Do you like her?”

“No, I do not. She has no get up about her,

or she would not let us children do as we please, the way she does.”

Martin decided that it would be best to make a change, and he pondered Mrs. Little’s suggestion that he give more time to his family.

Mrs. Jones was succeeded by Miss Emily Harvey, a lady of good family, who had never gone out to service, or done any work, except for her own family. She would not have taken charge of the kitchen at the parsonage and baked the bread or washed the dishes at any price. She was thirty-eight years old. Mrs. Martin had been dead a year, and when Miss Harvey became housekeeper the gossips hinted that she was setting her cap for the preacher. Her position was no sinecure. She made an effort to bring order out of the domestic chaos, but concluded it could not be done without getting the children all down on her, and she did not want to do that. She looked after the house-keeping and the sewing, and let the manners and morals take care of themselves. While she was wielding the scepter Mrs. Hood made the family a visit, and understood the situation at once.

“Brother Paul, how did it ever happen that you got Miss Harvey to keep house?”

“Mrs. Jones left us, and she seemed to be the only chance.”

“Can you not do better?”

“I do not know that we can. Do you not like her?”

“My liking has nothing to do with it. The

children are running wild, and she has no restraint over them at all."

"That was the trouble with Mrs. Jones; she could not manage the children."

"Miss Harvey does not try, and I cannot bear to see Mary's children brought up so, for they are in a fair way to be ruined."

"How?"

"By a want of proper discipline. Who governs them? To whom are they responsible for their actions?"

"To Miss Harvey."

"She does not control them at all, and they are going to destruction as fast as they can."

"Why, Sue!"

"Something must be done at once, or it will be too late. You must take them in hand yourself."

"What must I do?"

"You must govern them. You must give them something to do, and see that they do it."

"You mean some kind of work?"

"I mean that and everything else, for there is no order nor system about the house."

"I am sorry."

"Miss Harvey is not fit for her position."

"Do you know any one that we could get that would do better?"

"I do not know any one here, but Cousin Amanda would just suit you if she would come."

"You see her about it."

Mrs. Hood did see her as soon as she reached

home. Amanda Moore did not want to go, but she allowed herself to be persuaded to try, with the understanding that she would not have to stay if it proved unpleasant.

Miss Harvey received her as a guest.

She told Martin that he must dismiss his present housekeeper before she could take charge.

“Can you not do it?”

“Certainly not.”

He summoned the lady to his study. “Miss Harvey, we are all very much obliged to you for what you have done for us; but our cousin has come to live with us, and we will not need you any longer.”

She was taken by surprise. “Have I not given satisfaction?”

“Yes,” hesitatingly.

“I do not like to be turned off.”

“We are not turning you off,” but Mrs. Hood thought that the children would mind Cousin Amanda better than they do you, and she can teach them much that they have not learned.”

“I knew that Hood woman was at the bottom of it.”

“She takes an interest in her sister’s children.”

“And in you too. She knows that old, yellow, fifty-year-old woman will take care of you. I will get out of the way and give her a chance, and I hope you will get along.”

She had about given up all hopes of ever being

anything more than she was in the parsonage, and did not care as much as she otherwise might have done.

When she was gone Cousin Amanda took hold of the reins of the domestic affairs with a vim.

"Sue, you may take charge of the upstairs work."

"Me?"

"Yes, you."

"I cannot make a bed fit to be seen."

"You are nearly sixteen years old. It is time you could, and you can learn."

"I will make my own."

"You will make the boys' too."

"Both beds?"

"Yes, both beds, and keep their room in good order. Sweep and dust; you need not wait on them. Let them put away their own things."

Sue went to her brothers' room and found Robert there.

"I do not like the way Cousin Amanda is starting out."

"What has she done?"

"She says I have got to make both these beds and keep this room in order, for one thing."

"That is all right. Get at it."

"Suppose she makes you chop the wood and feed the cow?"

"She might do worse. Did it never occur to you that we are rather a useless set? We are not worth our salt."

"We are able to live without working."

“I am going to get papa to send me to college.”

“What for?”

“I want to amount to something in the world. Aunt Sue said my own money would put me through.”

“Aunt Sue is always meddling with us. She sent Cousin Amanda.”

“We needed her, and I only hope she will bring us around all right, for we have not had much training since mother died.”

Robert went directly to his father. “Papa, may I go to college?”

“Why, Robert?”

“If ever I am going to make anything of myself, it is time to begin.”

“How old are you?”

“I am nearly eighteen.”

“How time does fly! I should like to have you go, but I do not know about the money.”

“Aunt Sue says my own money will pay my way.”

“You consulted her?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Did she approve of it?”

“Yes, sir; she spoke of it first.”

“You can go.”

“Thank you.”

Robert went to college, and Sue took more interest in her studies than she had ever done before. Phebe was a meek, docile little creature who

made no trouble, but Tom and Jim and Bell were a terror to Cousin Amanda.

When she had tried everything that she ever heard of, and everything she could think of, to no effect, she gave up the contest. She wrote to Mrs. Hood that she would not take a warranty deed for the congregation, and the preacher thrown into the bargain, and attempt to run that house much longer.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE STEPMOTHER.

WHEN Cousin Amanda shook the parsonage dust off her feet they tried to get along without a housekeeper. Sue was about sixteen years old, and she left school and took upon her inexperienced shoulders the care of her father's house. That last evil was worse than any that had gone before. The housemaid refused to be "bossed around" by a bit of a girl like Sue Martin, and she left for more congenial surroundings. The sour bread, and the overdone and underdone vegetables that they were obliged to eat, after that calamity, was enough to give them all the dyspepsia.

"I wish I were dead!"

That expression, coming from the lips of his eldest daughter, startled Martin as he passed through the hall. He paused and looked into the kitchen, and saw her standing before a table, on which was placed a dishpan full of unwashed dishes. "What is the matter, Sue?"

Her whole frame shook with sobs. "Papa, you are a preacher, and you pretend to be a Christian, but I just say I would rather be dead, and go down to that awful hell you preach about, than to stay here."

“What is troubling you?”

“Just look at those dishes, and there is not a bed in the house made, and my head aches, and it is time to get dinner, and I just cannot do the work, and I have a notion to cut my throat.”

“You must not talk that way; you know you have no such thoughts. I know it is hard on you, but we will get a girl as soon as we can.”

“We will never get a girl.”

“Why not?”

“Because we will never find one fool enough to live here.”

“We will try; we will do the best we can.” He started on, but was recalled.

“Papa!”

“What?”

“If you would let me go and live some place else, you might get a girl, for they do not like to live where there is no woman, and where a girl like themselves is running things.”

“That will not do.”

The pastor was more troubled about his domestic affairs than he had ever been before. He was worried and greatly distressed. Sue wishing she were dead, and wanting to get away from her home, shocked him, and he knew not what to do. He repaired to his study, and sat down to think. He concluded that Sue's assertion that girls do not like to live where there is no woman, and where another girl is in charge, was probably correct, and that he would try to get another

er housekeeper. In the afternoon he walked over to Elder Patterson's, in the hope that the good woman of that house might know of some one who would consent to help them in their extremity. He was ushered into the parlor, and Mrs. Patterson received him kindly, and, turning to a stranger, presented him to Miss Miller. He was sorry he had called, for he could not discuss the cooking and the dish washing of his kitchen before that woman; but he took the offered chair, thinking that she might go soon, and found that she was visiting in the family. In a short time he was in the midst of an animated conversation, and he found himself wondering where she was from, and almost wishing she was poor enough to go out as a housekeeper. He accepted an invitation to supper, and enjoyed the well-cooked meal, and as he left he said to Mrs. Patterson: "I wanted to see you; I shall call again."

"All right. I shall be glad to see you."

He called in a day or two, and was rejoiced to hear that Mrs. Patterson knew of a housekeeper, for she had been looking for one for him, and Mrs. Stone had expressed a willingness to take charge of the house if he would put a good girl in the kitchen, and Jane Green would be glad of that place.

Martin expressed his thanks.

"Mr. Martin, there is something I should like to tell you."

"What is it?"

"Perhaps you would be offended, but it is this: what you need more than anything else is a good wife."

"I had not thought of that."

"You can think of it now. Your children need a good mother badly, and you will never have much comfort until you marry again."

Mrs. Stone and Jane Green were installed in their respective places in a few days, and Sue returned to school.

Martin called at Mrs. Patterson's again, to express his gratitude, and again he stayed for supper, and before leaving he managed to have a few words with his hostess. "How long is Miss Miller going to stay?"

"I think she will be here two or three weeks yet."

"Where does she live?"

"In Xenia." Then Mrs. Patterson asked mischievously: "Do you like her?"

"Very much."

"You know where we live; make hay while the sun shines."

Mrs. Patterson was delighted, for she knew Elizabeth Miller would not have an old widower, fifty years of age, with six spoiled children; but she would get him started, and he would find somebody who would accept the responsibility for the sake of the shelter.

Martin called every day, and the sun seemed to shine on his hay. Miss Miller, who was an orphan

and lived with her brother, protracted her visit several weeks.

The Pattersons enjoyed the situation very much. They did not think it quite right for Lizzie to flirt so with an old widower, and a preacher at that; but they did not suppose he would be hurt, and it was such fun, for he was in such earnest. When she went home she was engaged to take charge of the housekeeping at the parsonage, and before starting she told Mrs. Patterson. That lady was as indignant as she was surprised.

“You silly girl! He is over fifty years old.”

“He is only forty-seven, and I am thirty-two myself.”

“His children are not half civilized.”

“I will civilize them.”

“You will rue the day you met him.”

“You introduced us.”

“I did not know you were a fool.”

“Thank you.”

There was no one who had any right to control the lady, and she went back to Urbana in due course of time as the minister's wife.

No one who understood the situation envied her. Mrs. Stone was perhaps the most delighted woman in the congregation, for it gave her a chance to get out of her position, which was fast becoming unbearable.

Mrs. Elizabeth Martin took notes at first, and, although she saw everything and thought a good deal, she said but little. Robert was away from

home at college, and Sue was in a young ladies' day school, while Tom, Bell, and Jim attended the same private school. Mrs. Martin assumed the reins of government gradually, and she was careful to issue requests rather than commands when she spoke to Sue or Tom. She talked with Sue about her studies, and helped her with her music.

"It is very muddy. You had better wear your rubbers," she said one morning as Sue was starting to school.

Sue went on, and as she opened the gate Bell shouted: "She said you have got to put your rubbers on."

Sue went back slowly. "I hate so to wear rubbers."

"You need not wear them if you do not want to; I simply made a suggestion. I do not intend to assume much authority with you, for I think you are old enough to begin to govern yourself."

"It is all right; I will put them on." She went up to her room and returned with them on.

The next Saturday morning Jim tied a string around the neck of the cat, and, after running around the yard with it until it was tired, he finally adjourned to the hall with the wet, frightened animal mewling piteously.

"Jim, let that cat go."

"It is not your cat."

"Let it go."

"I won't do it."

Mrs. Martin advanced a few steps, and, releasing the cat from his grasp, she untied the string and it bounded away. Seizing Jim's arm, she started with him to the sitting room.

"Let me be."

"I want you."

"You ain't boss here. This ain't your house."

"It is your father's house, and I am his wife."

"It ain't, either; it belongs to us children, and we will put you both out if you don't behave yourself."

"We'll see about that."

She took him to her own room, and he was out of sight and hearing for several hours. The transaction was witnessed by the other children, and Bell, who regarded it as a tragedy, felt that Aunt Sue must know about it, so she went to her father's study and got paper and a pencil, and sat down under his eyes and wrote the following, which he sealed and addressed and mailed for her:

Dear Aunt Sue, Our step mother is just awful she most killed Jim today her got him locked up some place now he sassed her back and told her this is our house and we will put them out if she is bad i guess her will go when she gets her clothes ready i guess papa will not go cause he always lived here i am ten years old next week but i did not write for a present i wanted to tell you the awfull times we have

your loving niece, Bell Martin.

Mrs. Hood drew a long breath when she read the letter. She knew that Martin did not know its contents or he would not have mailed it, and she wondered what manner of man he was. She

hoped that the stepmother was endowed with more than the average of judgment, good sense, and discretion. She answered the letter without any allusion to the "awful times," and sent a birthday present.

Mrs. Martin had her hands full. She began with the house, which looked as if it had just passed through a siege. Carpets were worn, and there was scarcely a decent sheet or tablecloth in the house, and not enough dishes to set the table for the family. Martin had plenty of money, and he gave her the funds to refurnish according to her own taste, and things soon began to wear a better aspect. One evening as Tom passed through the hall dressed ready to go out he was met with the question: "Tom, are those your best clothes?"

"Yes."

"You ought to have a new suit."

"I agree with you there."

Vanity was not Tom's weak point, and he had not thought about getting new clothing.

A few days later he said: "What kind of a suit would you advise a fellow to get?"

"O, something nice, and stylish, and becoming, and serviceable, and so forth, and so on."

"I was looking at suits at Henry's to-day."

"Does not your father select your clothes?"

"No, mother always saw to that."

"I will take a peep at Henry's the first time I am down town."

When Tom went back the merchant said: "Here is a suit your stepmother picked out. She said to tell you to look at it, and if you liked it to try it on."

It was a good fit and was sent home, and Tom was a better boy after that. When Robert came home in vacation he hardly knew the place, and when alone with Sue for the first time he expressed his approbation. "This is something like living. We have got to live like folks."

"Yes, we do live better than we did. Mother is very particular."

"She ought to be. I tell you, I rather dreaded coming home."

"Why?"

"It was awful when I went away, and it seemed as if I had got to heaven when I got into a good boarding place."

"I rather hated having a stepmother."

"I did not, for I knew it could not be any worse than it was."

"You do not have to stay at home."

"Is it not an improvement on the old life?"

"Yes, I suppose it is."

Jim came bounding in. "Bob, do you like our stepmother?"

"Yes. Do you?"

"Not much."

"Why not?"

"She makes a fellow mind."

"That is what she is here for."

"She has no business here."

"She has no business anywhere else."

Bob's approval of the stepmother helped matters wonderfully. His appreciation of the good she had done in his father's household was evident in his treatment of her. The younger children had rather depended on him to take her down, and when he disappointed their expectations in that he sat at her feet they gave up the unequal contest. When the stepmother had been two years in the parsonage Mrs. Hood made another visit. Her quick eyes were not slow to discern that there was a master hand at the helm, and the ladies became fast friends. They discussed the children, and Mrs. Hood led the discussion on to the family finances. She had been Martin's prime minister so many years that she resolved to arrange one more little matter for him before resigning her position. She went to his study for that purpose.

"Brother Paul, you have got a jewel of a wife. I congratulate you."

"Thank you. I am glad you like her. We get along very comfortably."

"I want to talk to you about money matters."

"Well."

"Are you living on your salary or your private means?"

"Both."

"I supposed so. Has your wife anything of her own?"

"Not that I know of."

“That is what I want to talk about. You should make some provision for her.”

“She has what she wants.”

“She has now, but, Paul, did it ever occur to you that sometime you will die, or do you expect other people to do all the dying?”

“I expect to die.”

“If your wife lives longer than you do, what will become of her?”

“They can live on here as they are doing now.”

“Perhaps; you know you only have a life interest in this; when you die it belongs to the children.”

“Is that so?”

She felt like pinching him to wake him up. “Yes, it is so, and your wife may take her baby and go out washing.”

“O no.”

“That is about the amount of it.”

“What can I do?”

“You can live on your money and save your salary, and invest it in her name.”

“So I can.”

He went to work as usual, and did as Mrs. Sue Hood advised, and he consulted her in regard to proper investments, and in a few years his wife was in no danger of being in want. She looked well to the ways of her household, and her husband safely trusted her. When his first wife's children were men and women they had no better friend than their stepmother.

CHAPTER XXII.

PREACHERS' CHILDREN.

NOTWITHSTANDING the proverb that ministers' children are worse than ordinary mortals, the Martins all turned out well. Robert graduated in college, and although he did not take the valedictory as his father had done, he maintained that the reason was that it was not the same institution of learning. He entertained his audience on his Commencement day with a very creditable oration on a subject of his own selection, "On the Threshold." He studied law, and when admitted to the bar he soon rose to prominence and became a credit to his profession.

He fell desperately in love with a young lady while in school. She reciprocated his passion, and they were engaged. In a short time they had a falling out about some trifle, and she punished herself, and no doubt thought that she spited Bob, when she married a thoughtless youth, without any visible means of support, and destitute of a trade, profession, or even good business habits. Robert forgave her, and went to her wedding under the impression that his life would be one of celibacy.

All too soon Cupid fired another dart which went straight to his heart, and he poured out his

soul in sonnets and odes to the one he delighted to honor. But it was of no use; she turned a deaf ear to his love and eloquence and poetry, and told him to give his time and attention to his books, which was good advice, and he forever after held her in grateful remembrance.

When he worshiped at a third shrine, and was told that he was soaring too high, he was used to it, and was but little hurt.

When he had become settled in his profession, and had acquired a good practice, he met a bright-eyed little country girl, who took him captive on first sight, and he wooed and won her, with the approbation of the friends on both sides, and she made him a happy home, and they went through life hand in hand and heart answering to heart, neither sighing for a more perfect love or for anything that might have been.

Sue dreamed much of a "mission." She wanted to do some great thing, and too often neglected the little things that she might have done. She spent much time in visiting the poor, and, while she was truly sorry for them, it never entered her wise little head to sew on a button, or to teach them to do it for themselves. She taught a class in the Sabbath school, and never neglected to remind the members of it of their duty toward the poor heathen in China and Japan, and it was prophesied that she would marry a preacher and go to some foreign land as a missionary.

The young preachers who visited at her father's

house all admired her, and some of them paid her marked attention; but if any of them ever asked her to preside over another parsonage, she declined the honor, doubtless with thanks.

When she was twenty years old she embraced an opportunity to visit her father's relatives in Pennsylvania, and at the pleasant home of her Uncle Tom she met her fate. Her hero was just a common farmer, and her sister Bell thought the family would be forever disgraced if Sue stooped so low as to marry the fellow.

Tom wrote to his brother, and he immediately gave his fatherly blessing, stipulating that she should return home and have her marriage celebrated there.

When the appointed time came, and brought the Pennsylvania guests, the prospective bride had no occasion to blush for the man who was so soon to become her husband. Mrs. Hood's verdict was: "I am very much pleased with him. He is very intelligent and a good talker."

Even aristocratic Bell admitted: "If he is as good as he looks, he will do."

Martin refused to perform the ceremony which took his oldest daughter from his protecting care and placed her in a new home among other associations, but, having become personally acquainted with the man who had secured the first place in her affections, he was content.

Tom developed a marked taste for trade. When quite a small boy he was always trading in mar-

bles, tops, and knives, and, it must be admitted, he generally got the better of the bargain. He did not like school, and did not see much use in any of the studies in an ordinary curriculum, except arithmetic. He never had any trouble with the multiplication table, and when he got "through the book" he would have been pleased to consider his education finished. He entertained a profound respect for his stepmother, and appealed to her to persuade his father to let him leave school.

"What do you want to do?" she asked.

"I do not know, but I am tired of school."

"You do not want to leave school and simply loaf around?"

"O no, I will do anything to get to quit that everlasting old school."

"I sympathize with you, Tom. I do not mind telling you I never liked going to school very well myself, but my advice is to put your mind on your books while you do go, and choose some vocation in life, and then prepare for that."

"The trouble is I do not know what to choose. I do not want to learn a trade. I want some kind of business."

"Should you like to deal in dry goods?"

"No, I hardly think I should."

"Groceries?"

"No, I don't know what I want."

They both laughed, and a decision was put off until a more convenient time. One morning he heard Mr. Cornell, who kept a hardware store, ask

a man if he knew of a good, trusty boy, whom he could get to stay in his store while he went to Cincinnati. The man did not, and Tom immediately offered his services. Mr. Martin consented, and Tom was elated, but it did not prove to be as much fun as he had anticipated, and he experienced a feeling of relief when Mr. Cornell got back, and retired with the conviction that hardware was not in his line of business. He wanted to buy low and sell high, and yet he could not bear the idea of measuring calico or weighing sugar.

“Tom, would you like to go to Cincinnati?”

“I shouldn't object.”

“How old are you?”

“Going on forty.”

“None of your nonsense,” replied Mr. Cornell, “I mean business.”

“I was eighteen three weeks ago.”

Tom was sent to Cincinnati on a commission that was not a very important one. It was of so little importance that Mr. Cornell concluded that it would be to his interest to reverse the order of the programme this time, stay in the store himself, and send Tom. That was before the days of commercial travelers, or there would have been no need of the trip at all. Tom transacted the business to his own satisfaction and, as it afterwards proved, to the satisfaction of Mr. Cornell.

The firm was pleased with the straightforward boy that had been sent to them by their customer in Urbana. In answer to a question he told them

he was a son of the Presbyterian minister. The senior member took him to lunch with him.

“What kind of a place is that?”

“They sell machinery.”

As they returned he said: “I like the looks of that place.”

“I shall send you to see it.”

“Thank you.”

When they reached their place of business, Mr. Foster called a clerk. “Take Mr. Martin and show him over Lane & Gormley’s.”

“The machinists?”

“Yes.”

Tom found his work, and when he reached home he knew what he wanted to do, and it was to sell machinery. A place was obtained for him at the bottom of the ladder, and he worked his way up. When he went into business for himself, he moved to Chicago, and became an active partner in a lucrative business which extended all over the country.

Bell was the lady of the family. She never was half as anxious to DO as she was to BE. She became engaged to a stranger, whom she regarded as a prince in disguise. Some one noticed how the wind was blowing, and cautioned her sleepy father; and when he woke up he became very wide-awake, as he always did. The would-be lover was investigated, and his antecedents were found to be exceedingly doubtful, and as he had neither home nor friends; and his means were in

his pocket, and he kept his past record in the background, he was given an emphatic dismissal, and Bell was given a visit to her Aunt Sue, in Ashland, where she met another prince or two, but they were not considered dangerous and were given no attention. She actually fell in love with a lawyer in Urbana after her return, with whom she had played from childhood, and married him. He was good enough for her, and perhaps her ambition was realized when he was elected to Congress and took her to Washington. If she had outgrown it during the years that had passed, enough of it had descended to her daughter Sue to make their residence in the capital a desirable episode in the family life.

Jim wanted to travel. He did not want to DO as much as he wanted to GO. It must have been such as he that originated the commercial traveling system. He went to Pennsylvania to see his "relations," and went to Ashland repeatedly to see his Uncle Jim, and he went to Cincinnati to see Tom. He was not any more affectionate in his disposition than any other member of the family, but he simply wanted to go, and was never so happy as when he was going to some place unless it was when he was coming back. He went to California at an early age, to seek his fortune, and he found it, or at least enough to take him from there to South America. He wrote home from Australia, but the letter was so long on the briny deep that the family were not sure about his ad-

dress, although they risked the necessary postage in an attempt to let him hear from the loved ones left behind. He went into the tea business, and, having accumulated another fortune, he sent Phebe some handsome diamonds to remember him by, and went on an extended tour to Jerusalem and the Holy Land. Thanks to his early training, he lived a pure, upright life throughout all his wanderings, and when at last he became homesick he returned to the scenes of his childhood, when he was a little past forty years old, with means enough to procure a cozy home, and surrounded with a halo of glory on account of his adventures. He went into farming and stock raising, persuaded a nice little girl to marry him, and was a hundred thousand times happier than he deserved to be.

Phebe, the meek, gentle little girl, who obeyed all the housekeepers, even to Mrs. Jones, proved to be the greatest trial of any of the family. She wanted to go on the stage. She was a member of the Church, and partook of the holy communion regularly, and she could not be made to see any inconsistency between her profession and the theater. She fostered her tastes by taking part in all the tableaux and exhibitions that were given by the schools, and also by the churches for charitable purposes. She could not discriminate between a little home-made theater, with a ten-cent admittance for the benefit of a destitute Sabbath school, and the real article, with an admittance of

a dollar, as a matter of business. Martin had to be waked up again, and she resigned to parental authority the cherished desire of her heart. She did not marry, and when she died at the early age of thirty years there was a vague notion in the family that Phebe was an unlucky name.

The oldest child of Mrs. Elizabeth Martin married a minister and went with him to a pastorate in Chicago, where his services were undoubtedly needed. They told her that if they had known she was starting off on a husband-hunting expedition, when she went to visit her brother Tom, they would have kept her at home. Her mother remembered the past, and wisely held her peace.

The other child followed in the footsteps of his honored father. He lived to preach the gospel in foreign lands, and, though the youngest born, he was not the least in his father's house. Eight children rose up and called Martin "blessed." They were trained up in the way they ought to go, and when they were old not one of them departed from that way.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE PROBATION ENDED.

AMONG the many improvements made in the thriving little city of Urbana was a new cemetery. The custom of burying the dead in a yard set apart for that purpose adjoining the church was abandoned, and suitable grounds were purchased on an eminence and converted into a city of the dead. The remains of many who had lain in the grave for years were raised and reinterred, partly that the old grounds might be used for other purposes, and partly from a sentimental idea that, when the last trumpet shall sound, those buried side by side shall come up out of their graves together, and be forever reunited.

Elder Little went the way of all the earth, and the body he no longer needed was buried in the new cemetery. Martin conducted the services in the home of the departed, and at the close an announcement was made that the books would be on the grounds and selections of burial lots might be made and purchased. A slip of paper containing the number of the lot, fastened to a stake which was driven into the ground, facilitated the sale. After the interment the people scattered around and inspected the new cemetery. The death of Elder Little cast a feeling of depression over them, and

many bought lots who perhaps would not have done so had they happened there under other circumstances. Martin joined Mr. Meloy and Elder Patterson, who were talking under the shade of a large oak tree.

“I think,” said he, “that when I am done with this world I should like to lie just here;” and he placed his hand on a small shrub which had been used instead of a stake to number the lot.

“Have you got a lot?” inquired Mr. Meloy.

“No, we have not.”

“You ought to have. Every man ought to make his will and own a lot in the cemetery.”

“I have no property to dispose of. I do not need to make a will, but I can buy a lot. Lend me a pencil, please, to write the number. I will take this one.”

“Had you not better look around first?”

“I have looked around, and I have taken a notion to this.”

He took the number, Block H, No. 74, and walked off.

A few minutes after, his wife drove up in the carriage. “Have you seen Mr. Martin?”

“He left here about five minutes ago.”

She looked around. “What a lovely spot!”

“Mr. Martin spoke of buying that lot.”

“Which one?”

“Number 74.”

“It looks restful, but I hope we won’t need it.” She drove on.

Meloy and Patterson went to the Secretary's desk and made the following entry: "Lot No. 74, Block H, Rev. Paul Martin. Presented by a few friends."

When Mrs. Martin found her husband they drove back and looked at the place together, and, having decided to buy it, they drove past the Secretary's desk on their way home, and found that they had been anticipated.

One raw March morning the next spring Mrs. Martin took her usual place at the head of the table, saying: "Your father will not be out to breakfast. He is sick."

"Is he bad?" inquired Phebe.

"No, I think not. You can go in and see him after you eat your breakfast."

"It is nothing but a cold," he asserted. "I will get up after dinner."

He became worse.

"I am getting old, and I cannot stand what I used to. I cannot throw it off," he explained.

His wife sent for the doctor, and he seemed alarmed. "Have you ever been sick much?" he inquired.

"No, I have not been sick for years."

"How long have you been in Urbana?"

"About twenty-seven years."

"That is certainly long enough to be acclimated. How old are you?"

"I am sixty-two."

The doctor prepared some medicines, and as he

left he gave Mrs. Martin a look which bade her follow him.

She waited to hear what he wished to say.

"I am sorry to tell you, but it is a serious case."

"What is the trouble?"

"It is a bad case of pneumonia."

"Is not that something new?"

"Yes, or rather a new name for an old disease. It is about the same thing as lung fever."

"Is he dangerously sick?"

"I am afraid that he is. I shall come and see him again in an hour or two, and bring Dr. Snow. I don't want the responsibility all on my shoulders."

Mrs. Martin turned and met the blanched face of Phebe, who had been listening at her back, and had heard every word.

She drew her into the sitting room. "Compose yourself, Phebe. We must work; we have no time for tears."

"What can we do?"

"We must take care of your father, and save him if we can. Come to his room. We will make him as comfortable as possible, and you can stay with him while I write some dispatches."

Jim had gone to Chicago to see Tom, and the same dispatch brought both of them.

Robert and Sue were summoned, and the next-door neighbor who took the dispatches to the office called at Bell's residence with the distressing news.

Sue was the last to reach home, but they were all there in time.

Martin was a very sick man from the first, but he was conscious and rational throughout his illness. One night Robert watched alone with his father a few hours, while the family tried to get a little of the rest they so much needed.

“Robert!”

“Do you want anything, father?”

“Yes, I want to talk to you.”

“You are too weak to talk much.”

“I know I am weak, but will I ever be any stronger?”

“We hope so.”

“Tell me the truth. Does the doctor say I am going to die?”

“He considers you in a critical condition, but he has not said that you cannot recover.”

“I do not think I will. I think my work is about done.”

“You must not give up.”

“It is easy to give up. I do not seem to have any hold on life. It must be that my time has come.”

“You had better not talk any more, father; it hurts you.”

“No, it does not hurt me; it relieves me. When I was a young man I was very sick, lower than I am now. I had passed through a great trouble, and I should rather have died than have lived.”

He paused, and Robert gave him a quieting draught that the doctor had left to be administered in case it was needed.

He remained quiet for half an hour, and Robert thought he was sleeping. Suddenly he said: "It was impossible to die. I had a work to do. I think it is done now. I am not anxious to die. I enjoy life, but I am willing to give it up. I should like to see your Aunt Sue."

"We can send for her."

"It is hardly worth while."

Robert went and waked Tom, who took a message for Mrs. Hood. She was in poor health, and they had decided not to send for her when the matter had been mentioned.

The congregation of which Martin was pastor held a special prayer meeting instead of the regular services on the Sabbath. They besought the throne of grace in behalf of him who went in and out before them and broke for them the bread of life.

An electric thrill passed through the congregation as one man prayed: "O Lord, thou knowest that our dear pastor is sick unto death. Thou knowest that he baptized me when an infant. Thou knowest that he united me to the woman of my choice in the holy bonds of matrimony. Thou knowest that he baptized our firstborn. And now, our Father in heaven, we ask thee, in the name of the dear Son, wilt thou not spare him unto us a little longer?"

God knew best.

When Mrs. Hood reached the parsonage his life could be counted by hours. He was glad to see her: "Why, Sue! I didn't know they had sent for you."

"Yes, they sent for me. I am sorry to see you so sick."

"I am pretty low. I understand it. I am going home."

"I am so glad it is 'going home' for you."

"O yes, it surely is, and I wanted to see you. Have you any word to send to Mary?"

Mrs. Hood was so taken by surprise that she did not know what to say. Although a minister, he had never talked much to her on the subject of death or the future life. She remembered that she had often heard it said in Ashland that Martin was such a good pastor, and so tender and considerate and helpful in sickness and death. "I hardly know," she replied. "I am getting to be an old woman. You can tell her that it will not be long until I too shall go."

"We shall keep a lookout for you. I am glad you came. I can tell father and mother and Mary that I saw you, and that you were all right."

They were all sobbing around his bed. "What are you all crying about?" he asked.

"Because you are so sick," replied Phebe.

"I am not dying. I wish you wouldn't cry so; it makes me nervous."

Some of them passed out of the room, and the

rest restrained their tears. He lay with his eyes wide open, as if thinking, and his thoughts went back to his youth. Presently he exclaimed: "Life is a probation, from the cradle to the grave."

"Do not talk so much, father; you will wear yourself out," suggested Sue.

"No, I will not. It does not matter now. It is just about so long."

"What is about so long?"

"My life. The doctor will come pretty soon, and feel my pulse, and tell you that there will be a change about the middle of the night or in the morning."

"O father, please do not talk."

"It does not hurt me. I like to talk."

He was quiet again, and slept a little. The doctor did come in an hour or so.

"How is he?" inquired Robert.

"He is very low," replied the doctor.

He was given some medicine, and the doctor suggested that the family retire and give him a chance to sleep. His brother Tom, who had come with Sue, and Jim watched with him.

"Tom!"

He was at the bed in an instant. "What is it?"

"You do not expect Phebe will care, do you?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean Phebe Fergus. I have been thinking about old times. She will not care that I married Mary?"

Tom was dumfounded. He was glad that Mrs.

Martin and Mrs. Hood were not in the room to hear the reminiscence.

“Why do you not tell me? Do you think she will care?”

“O no, of course not.”

“I have been very happy, but I do not want her to feel bad.”

“She will not care. She understands it.”

“If it had been me that died, do you think she would have married?”

“I expect she would.”

“I am glad of that.”

Again he was quiet, and then he slept. Morning dawned without any particular change. Robert stayed with him while the rest breakfasted. The sick man looked up surprised. “I’m going now.”

Robert stepped across the hall to the dining room and, beckoning them to come, was back in a moment. “Father, are you worse?”

“No, but the change is about here.”

They all came in. His wife knelt beside the bed, and his eight children all stood around it. His brother Tom and Mrs. Hood stood together a little behind the circle. The doctor came in and, advancing to the bed, felt the sinking man’s pulse.

“Is he dying?”

“Yes.”

There was nothing more that he could do. He stepped back and, with the rest, looked on. Martin could not get his breath. “Raise his head a

little," suggested the doctor. Robert and Sue adjusted the pillows. A look of pleased surprise spread over his countenance.

"Why, Phebe!"

The minister's probation was ended.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00021932322

